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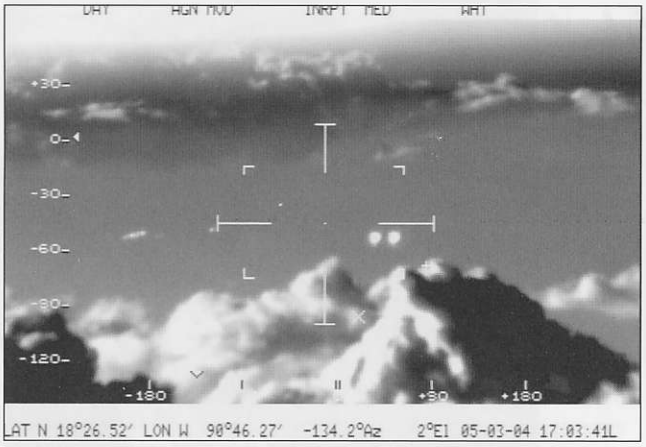


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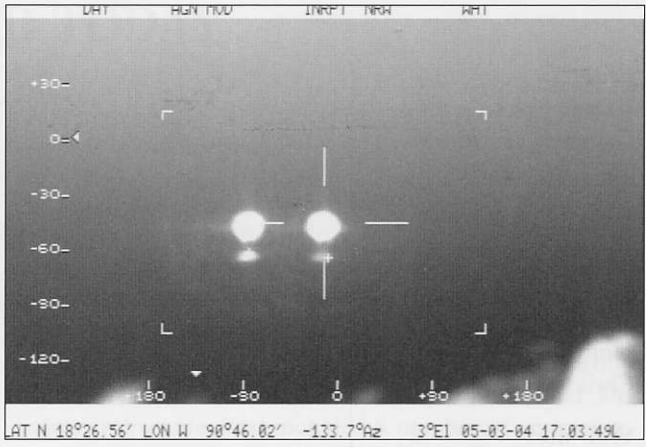


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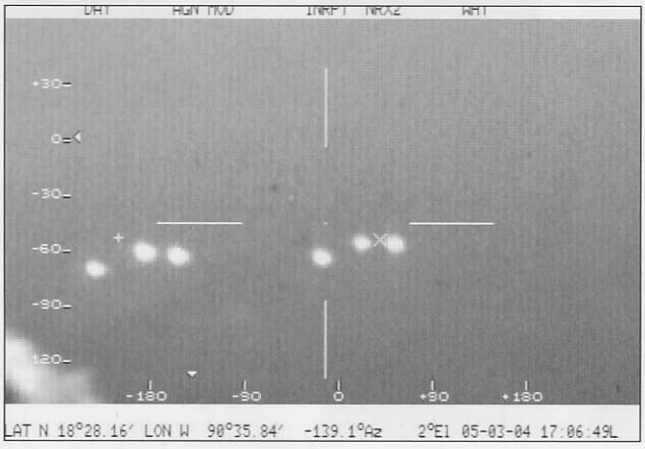


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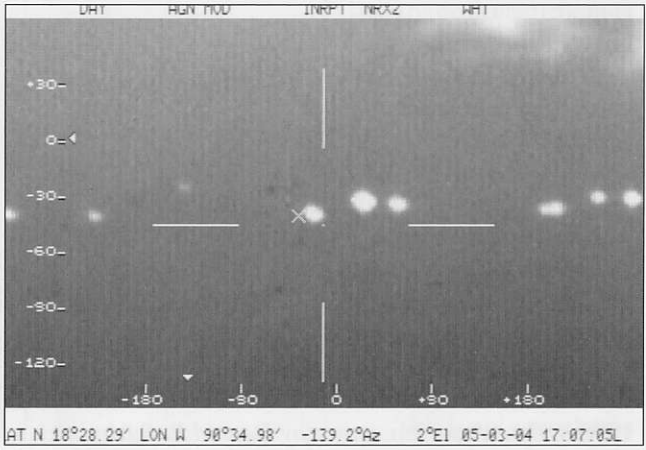


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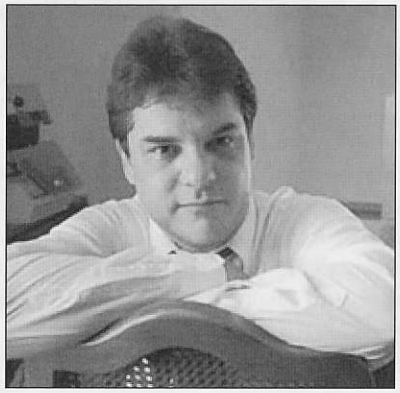

*Charles R. Smith*

*Ivan Semeniuk*

# SKEPTICS FAIL TO EXPLAIN THE MEXICAN AIR FORCE PHOTOS

# INTERNATIONAL UFO REPORTER

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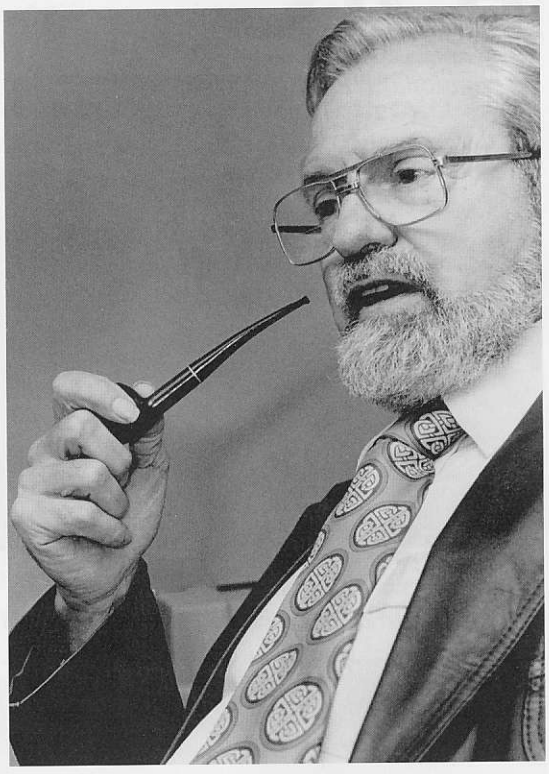

J. Allen Hynek
1910-1986

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# When UFOs were serious business:

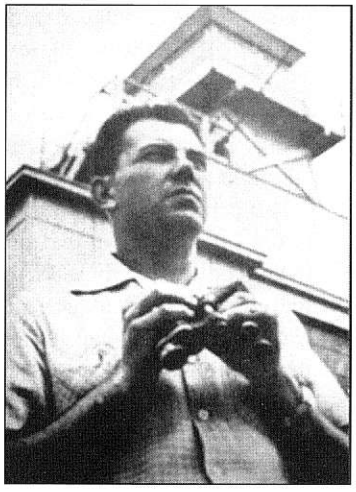
## Then and today

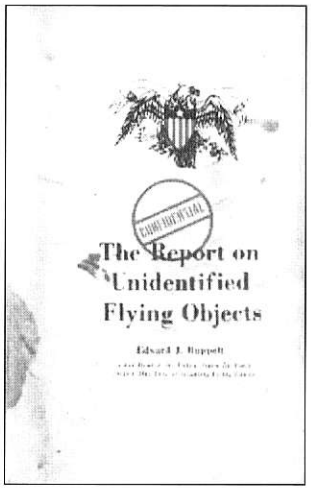
BY MICHAEL HALL

Since the publication of the Condon Report and the subsequent closure of the Air Force's Project Blue Book in 1969, little is known about what the U.S. government is doing about UFOs—if it's doing anything at all. In fact, barring a brief wave of sightings in the fall of 1973 and a few infrequent though unique sightings and case investigations such as the Roswell crash/retrieval, the phenomenon has not been a subject that the government or the media care to focus on with any consistency.

This not to say that UFOs are not still being seen in notable numbers. In fact, it is ironic that there is so much apparent apathy, considering the continuously intriguing nature of the phenomenon. Serious researchers, who continue to try to bring the phenomenon with all its widely divergent characteristics to public attention, are not to be faulted. And, it very well may be that much work and discussions are currently going on behind the scenes of officialdom. Assuming that is the case, I hope future histories will be able to document all the facts. On the other hand, perhaps the rather nebulous and elusive nature of UFOs in general has made it a subject that is easier to ignore than address. Only a few short years ago, global terrorism was a subject that this nation chose to conveniently deemphasize, and that may very well be an apt analogy.

Today's government interest in UFOs is without doubt a matter of some speculation, and I will comment on it at the end of this article. However, there was once a time in America when UFOs were routinely the subject of national attention. They were serious business. Tens of thousands of newspaper articles from 1947 to the 1960s dealt with the sightings of "flying saucers"—as the phenomenon was then more popularly termed. Before the age of a TV in every house, serious magazines such as *Life*, *Look*, and *The Saturday Evening Post* included a number of serious articles on UFOs. We also know from years of tedious study by dedicated researchers of government and military documents that there was a time when high-ranking officials considered UFOs to be real. The term "real" had a number of definitions depending on the personalities involved, but the point is that UFOs were much more on the horizon of current concerns than they now seem to be.






*Edward J. Ruppelt, and the cover of a rare edition of his* Report on Unidentified Flying Objects *published by Fieldcrest in 1965.*

This is not a revelation to veteran researchers or observers of the field. However, many of those same dedicated researchers tend to forget that one of our key tasks is to educate the public on this matter. UFO researchers are more than just intellectual explorers. They are teachers. Their most important students are the next generation because they are the ones who will continue the study. For that reason, among others, it is important to emphasize the early years of sightings and contrast that time to our current era.

That early period can be viewed as a sort of control group because it predated the age of high-performance aircraft and satellites that could be mistaken for UFOs. Equally important is the fact that this early period represented a time before the military-industrial complex and intelligence services became so supersecretive and bureaucratic. There were then still many closely guarded secrets kept, but UFOs in general were at least still an acknowledged topic of national debate.

Captain Edward Ruppelt was one of the more notable

*Michael Hall is executive director of the Gold Coast Railroad Museum in Miami, Florida, and a member of the CUFOS board.*

Air Force personalities who played a historic part in making the subject a serious topic in those early days. He wrote a book in 1956, *The Report on Unidentified Flying Objects*, that discussed his work as head of Project Blue Book. Many fledgling researchers may be aware of who he was, but have often failed to read his book and some of the amazing passages in it. For example, Ruppelt stated that he learned at one of his many briefings at the Pentagon during the 1952 UFO wave of sightings, that there were members of USAF Intelligence Director Maj. Gen. John A. Samford's senior staff who considered UFOs to be "real" (see Michael Swords's article, pp. 7–11). Imagine what it would mean today if a retired military official revealed that such discussions had recently gone on in the Pentagon:

> They thought we now had plenty of evidence to back up an official statement that the UFO's were something real and, to be specific, not something from this earth. This group wanted Project Blue Book to quit spending time investigating reports from the standpoint of trying to determine if the observer of a UFO had actually seen something foreign to our knowledge and start assuming that he or she had. They wanted me to aim my investigation at trying to find out more about the UFO. Along with this switch in operating policy, they wanted to clamp down on the release of information. They thought that the security classification of the project should go up to Top Secret until we had all of the answers, then the information should be released to the public.[1]

It is also due in part to Ruppelt that modern researchers know where to look for clues to historical data that expands our understanding of the government's early handling of UFOs. Four years ago, Wendy Connors and I authored a biography of Capt. Edward Ruppelt. During our research we interviewed former Air Force Intelligence associates of Ruppelt. As an example, I had the good fortune to have an informal sit-down discussion with Col. Nathan Rosengarten in 1999. He was the intelligence officer at Wright-Patterson AFB who first assigned Ruppelt, then a lieutenant, to UFO investigations. This occurred after a rather dramatic sighting near Fort Monmouth, New Jersey, on September 10, 1951—a sighting that led to a real shake-up because UFO investigations had become inactive. But during a high-level staff meeting held by Intelligence Director Maj. Gen. Charles P. Cabell at his Pentagon office on October 1, 1951, orders were given to reorganize the UFO project and beef it up!

Col. Rosengarten was actually at that watershed meeting and may be the only veteran alive who can recount it. He had a very interesting insight into Cabell's views on UFOs. I did not quote Rosengarten's story about Cabell's UFO opinion in our Ruppelt biography because he had spoken off the record on that particular matter. However, now that we have published our book and several years have passed, I feel I can quote him.

I should, however, preface this story by stating that Col. Rosengarten had first stressed to me that he knew very little on UFOs in general and that the meeting he attended with Maj. Gen. Cabell was actually the only time he was in a high-level Pentagon conference in which UFOs were even discussed. Since Cabell had initiated this now historic meeting to troubleshoot the overall investigative process at that time, I asked Rosengarten what he thought the General's own position was. Rosengarten simply said Cabell was quite taken with flying saucers and that it was plain that he "thought they were from another world."[2]

*Lt. Col. Nathan Rosengarten, ca. 1950*

*Maj. Gen. Charles P. Cabell*

It is important to point out that even as director of Air Force Intelligence at that time, Cabell was not free to set overall policy on UFOs. So this should not be taken to mean that all top-level Pentagon officials thought likewise, or that Cabell necessarily had any special insight. It is also notable that Cabell stated years later in his own memoirs that because of the subsequent Robertson Panel and Condon Committee conclusions, he felt the UFO matter warranted no further investigation. On the other hand, he did say in those same memoirs that he had "challenged" his intelligence officers to approach the subject from the standpoint of trying to prove the phenomenon real, as opposed to the more difficult task of trying to prove a negative.[3]

The most interesting and shocking fact I learned from Col. Rosengarten's interview was that the bulk of that famous Pentagon meeting centered on talk of Orson Welles's 1938 Halloween eve CBS radio drama.[4] Connors and I wrote about this in detail in our book. Whether that 1938 radio drama actually did cause panic when first aired, or a release of UFO data in 1951 would have created mass hysteria, is beside the point. The key fact is that these top military leaders were talking about such things in that meeting, so they obviously were taking this subject very seriously, putting the UFO phenomenon in the context of extraterrestrial visitation.

Released interoffice files of the FBI from 1952 also confirm that some Air Force officials considered UFOs to literally be out of this world:

> Air Intelligence advised of another credible and unex-

plainable sighting of flying saucers. Air Intelligence still feels flying saucers are optical illusions or atmospherical phenomena but some military officials are seriously considering the possibility of interplanetary ships.[5]

## Military UFO sightings

One reason that some of these Pentagon officials may have been so interested in the phenomenon is that there were a number of senior level Air Force officers who themselves had good sightings. Cabell's most trusted assistant and wartime 8th Air Force compatriot, Brig. Gen. William M. Garland, is a good example. Garland had a flying saucer sighting of his own at Mather Air Force Base near Sacramento, California, in 1950, of which even Ed Ruppelt was aware (see pp. 7–11).[6]

*Maj. Gen. John Samford with Ruppelt (top)*

Other examples of senior Air Force officials' sightings rank among the best cases ever documented but, for some reason, were never reviewed by subsequent panels that sought to study the phenomenon. One such case occurred over Carson Sink, Nevada, when two extremely competent observers, Lt. Col. John L. McGinn and Lt. Col. John R. Barton, had a close airborne encounter with UFOs. McGinn and Barton were not only Pentagon intelligence-level staff officers, but also intimately familiar with every type of aircraft and missile in the world at the time.

Their incident took place on July 24, 1952, while on board a twin-engine B-25 bomber that they had requisitioned for a cross-country flight beginning from Hamilton AFB (formerly Hamilton Field). After takeoff they headed east on a very clear day with unlimited visibility. Such perfect flying conditions are appreciated by any veteran flyer, especially the two men, who were looking forward to a smooth ride and the chance to take in some beautiful scenery. McGinn and Barton did see some amazing terrain but soon saw something even more spectacular when they entered "Green 3," the airway's version of a cross-country highway.

By 3:40 p.m. MST, they were over the Carson Sink area flying at 11,000 feet. At that moment the pilots spotted three "aircraft" ahead of them and to their right. Initially they assumed these must be F-86 jet fighters. The "bogies" were moving much like the new jets—although something just didn't add up. If they were F-86s, they should have been at a different altitude in accordance with civil air regulations, and it also appeared odd to see military jets fly in what appeared to be a perfect V-formation.

In short order they closed in on the objects for a better look. The pilots gradually realized they weren't F-86s at all. They could clearly see that each craft had a bright silvery surface as an F-86 might have. Yet, uncharacteristically, they displayed a clean upper triangular wing with a definite ridge running from nose to tail. McGinn and Barton did not feel that these objects could be a new type of delta jet because they had no tails or pilot's canopies. They were, in fact, totally dissimilar to any aerodynamic form they had ever seen. Before the pilots fully grasped the fantastic sight before them, the strange objects made a left bank and zoomed within approximately 600 yards of their B-25—an uncomfortably short distance in the air. The UFOs increased their speed, which was estimated by both pilots to be at the very least three times that of any conventional jet then flying.

After only four short seconds, the hair-raising maneuver was over and the UFOs departed with tremendous acceleration. Later, the shaken pilots landed at Colorado Springs and were on the phone right away to Air Defense Command Headquarters. When they learned that no civilian or military aircraft were anywhere near them at 3:40 p.m., the magnitude of their sighting sank in. McGinn and Barton were both command pilots with very distinguished combat service careers, having logged several thousand hours flying time each. They were then currently assigned to the Pentagon with highly classified assignments and were perfectly familiar with even the most secret foreign and domestic aircraft designs.

While being debriefed about their sighting, McGinn and Barton both stated that neither of them had seen anything remotely like the objects before, but they indicated that they had probably witnessed what some of their fellow officers had also personally observed, "flying saucers."[7] Blue Book personnel carefully studied this case and located all delta-wing jets, then exclusively flown by the Navy. None had been in the Green 3 area on July 24. Ruppelt then personally checked other sources, which had no records of aircraft, balloons, or anything of any kind over Carson Sink at the time of the amazing sighting.[8]

Another high-profile witness was Brig. Gen. E. M. Day, who wrote to his good friend, Intelligence Director Samford, about what he saw. This is another case that has been conveniently ignored by subsequent scientific panels that have reviewed the phenomenon:

> Major General John A. Samford
> Director of Intelligence
> Department of the Air Force
> Washington 25, D.C.
>
> Dear Sammy:
> I never thought it would be said that I would join the great army of flying saucer seers. However, note the attached report. I know that you have some sort of a section that is considering these reports; therefore I

send this to you so that you may pass it along to them.

The duration, distinctness, and the complete unexplainedness of my sighting leave me positive of the details of my report. Never more will I be skeptical of anybody's fanciful tales. Please don't think that the desert has got the best of me.

SUBJECT: Report Upon Sighting of "So-Called" Flying Saucer

TO: Director of Intelligence
Department of the Air Force
Washington D.C.
Place: Dhahran, Saudi Arabia
Date: 19 April 1952
Time: 2120 local daylight savings (1620Z)
Weather Conditions: Night, cloudless skies, maximum visibility, no moon but starlet.

1. While reclining alone on my patio for an after-dinner smoke, I noticed in the far distance in the general south-southwest area of the sky what, at first glance, I thought was the tail end of a "shooting star" which are commonly seen in this area of the world. My next instant realization was that this object in the sky was not falling toward earth but was traveling horizontal to the ground at a constant altitude and on a constant course. My next mental reaction was that it was an aircraft approaching the Air Base. This was instantly dispelled by the high rate of closure of the object coming almost directly toward me and by the fact that although conditions surrounding me at the time were extremely quiet, I heard absolutely no sound from this flying object. The speed was so great that I knew it could not be an airplane of any type. At this point, knowing the tricky illusion one gets in looking into a straight sky, I looked completely away from the object and back again; my eyes immediately picked it up, although it was considerably farther along on its course. By this time I was positively convinced that it was some unusual phenomenon. I continued to follow the object along with my eyes until it disappeared into a generally north-northeasterly direction beyond the scope of normal vision. It was necessary for me to turn almost a complete 180 degrees in order to follow the object until I lost sight of it. I would judge as a fairly accurate estimate that the object was visible to me for a period of from 5 to 6 seconds. I would judge its speed as considerably in excess of any jet aircraft I have seen in flight. If I were forced to estimate the speed it would be in the neighborhood of a thousand to twelve hundred miles an hour.

2. The appearance of the object at first was a dull glow without sharply defined dimensions more of the nature of a transport aircraft['s] single lighted window at a fair distance during a night flight. The intensity was about that of a low wattage electrical light bulb when the current is weak. As the object approached nearer my line of sight it distinctly broke into two parts on absolutely the same altitude and without wavering or fluctuations relative to each other, allowing my imagination the impression that the glow was at the extreme sides or tips of some unseen body between—almost the same impression one would receive seeing navigation lights on an aircraft's wing tips at night. This was further borne out as the object traveled across the sky by the relative position of these two glows changing as the angle of sight changed in the same manner as would navigation lights on an aircraft as the aircraft traveled along a given course. As the object progressed into the distance and I had a stern chase view, the two glows distinctly separated again verifying and emphasizing the impression discussed above. The altitude during this entire sighting I would describe as a medium altitude above 10,000 feet and below 20,000 feet although this particular impression is the one which I am least positive. If I were to assume that this were some sort of an aircraft with the two glows at the extremities there of I would say that it was an aircraft of considerable size, but I must add that I saw nothing beyond the two glows which would indicate a vehicle of any kind.

3. Being thoroughly familiar with aircraft, weather balloons and other aeronautical objects during my entire career, I am positive that it was none of these things.

E. M. Day
Brigadier General, USAF [9]

## UFO INTEREST TODAY

It would be easy to go on at great length illustrating the point that there was a time in our recent history that UFOs were known to be very serious business. And it may very well be that even today military pilots and senior officers are still having sightings and are similarly convinced of the reality of UFOs just as they were 50 years ago. There certainly have been many contemporary stories circulating about military and government interest in UFOs. The problem, however, is that we do not have clear-cut documentation of this as we do for the events of earlier years. But that is the whole point! The next generation must seek that hard and fast documentation. Therefore, the following brief conclusion to this article must be somewhat speculative but will reinforce why researchers need to be encouraged.

I can only provide my own viewpoint on possible directions. In short, I feel there is evidence that senior military leaders do still talk about UFOs and may have had some notable encounters in recent years. Wendy Connors and I were told by a former associate of Donald Keyhoe that as late as the 1970s he still had contacts within the military who were not only seriously discussing UFOs but were seeing them. In a 1999 interview with Robert Young, the

*(continued on page 23)*

# 1952: RUPPELT'S BIG YEAR

BY MICHAEL D. SWORDS

The year 1952 was a wonderful one for ufology. There was a great UFO flap, and we had the most UFO-serious Pentagon of all time. Conspiracists and socioculturists probably see a connection between these two things. I don't. I think that, for a change, we were just lucky.

It is difficult to know why the winds were blowing as they did in the Pentagon before the 1952 flap even began. Part of that story (my guess) included a military officer who had a huge influence, but who has been relatively overlooked, considering his stature. This person resided almost at the top of U.S. Air Force intelligence: Brig. Gen. William C. Garland.

## WILLIAM GARLAND

Garland was for much of his military career a colleague of Maj. Gen. John Samford, the Air Force director of intelligence in 1952, who also played a big role in the events of that pivotal year. Three years younger than Samford, Garland met his older colleague in 1937 when they were 1st and 2nd lieutenants working with the bombing squadron at France Field in the Canal Zone. Later in 1942–43, they were chief of staff and assistant chief of staff for operations for the 8th Bomber Command in England. Samford and Garland both returned to the states in the fall of 1944, Garland initially as deputy commander of Langley, Samford as deputy assistant to the chief of staff in the Pentagon. Garland was quickly transferred to the Pentagon in 1945 and became chief of the Technical Services branch.

*Maj. Gen. William C. Garland*

The two, now close, saw their careers wander apart briefly after the war until they were together again at the National War College in 1951 (Garland as a student, Samford as commandant). By that autumn, both were back in the Pentagon. Garland had been assigned to the Air Targets division in Operations (as chief), but as soon as Samford was named the new director of intelligence in the fall of 1951 (around late October), he called for and got Garland as his assistant for production, a right-hand trustee and confidant. But what does all this have to do with UFOs?

One of the first tasks that Samford asked Garland to undertake was to get a handle on the UFO situation. Should the Wright-Patterson UFO study project be continued, and, if so, in what way? Garland was happy to oblige for more reasons than simple duty.

Sometime between mid-1948 and mid-1950, Garland had seen something unexplained. Capt. Edward J. Ruppelt, one of our few good inside sources for these early years, writes the following in the notes in his manuscript collection. (Whenever I quote from Ruppelt's rapidly written or typed notes, I correct his typos or grammar when these glitches have nothing to do with the sense of the note. You can always come to Kalamazoo and see the originals if you're of a mind to.)

> Gen. Garland first got into the project early in the game. He was Deputy for Production for General Samford. He pushed the project and was the first "big gear" to give us support. He personally handled all the UFO business for Gen. Samford. He later came out to ATIC as our chief.
>
> His interest stemmed from the fact that he had seen a UFO. When he was at Mather AFB [in Sacramento] he and some other people were sitting in their yard one evening. They all saw this bright, silvery, round object. The General said that it was going too fast for a balloon or an airplane. They sighted it through some wires, so they got a good idea of angular velocity. Three of the people who saw it were command pilots.

*Michael D. Swords is professor emeritus of the Environmental Institute, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo.*

So. Right near the top of Air Force intelligence was a UFO witness.

What effect did Garland's enthusiasm have on the boss? Ruppelt gives us some insight on this as well:

> General Samford never committed himself one way or the other on the subject of UFOs. He was always very interested and gave us the utmost cooperation but he never said much. He used to ask many of the other people at meetings what they thought and there were a lot of "pro" answers, but he never agreed or disagreed with anyone. The only time that I ever heard him say anything was when Col. Porter [the extremely anti-UFO deputy director of estimates, and a holdover from the anti-saucer Grudge era] got real nasty about the whole thing one day, and began to knock ATIC, UFOs, me, and everything associated with the project. Then he [Samford] said something to the effect that as far as he could see, I was the first person in the history of the Air Force's investigation that had taken a serious approach to the investigation, and that he didn't see how anyone could decide until I'd collected more data.

So, at the *very* top of the Intelligence directorate, there was an open-minded man taking the subject very seriously, and not going to put up with emotional negativism. And, having the positive influence of Brig. Gen. Garland around him goes a long way towards explaining how Samford, in his touchiest public moment (the Washington, D.C., press conference to quiet the public about the July sightings), could open the conference with "there have remained a percentage of this total, in the order of twenty percent of the [received UFO] reports, that have come from credible observers of relatively incredible things. . . ." Including his good friend and colleague Garland.

There is one more piece of the Garland story that we know a little about which further illustrates his influence on the atmosphere surrounding UFOs at the time. In early 1951, prior to Garland's Pentagon posting, *Life* magazine in the person of Bob Ginna took an interest in the saucer story. It is rumored that he was either inspired to do this by, or at least found an encouraging supporter in, James Forrestal. Whatever the reason, Gen. Charles Cabell (then the director of Air Force Intelligence) felt that he had to cooperate with Ginna. Cabell inquired of Col. Harold Watson whether the disk reports were being investigated properly at Wright-Patterson. Watson, the great saucer-hater, said "Sure." Cabell then informed him that *Life* was sending a reporter to the base and, as Ruppelt later commented, *that* produced "bedlam in the raw."

Watson and Project Grudge dysfunctionals like Jimmy Rodgers and Roy James were, of course, not paying *any* serious attention to UFOs and considered the whole matter nonsense. Ruppelt wrote:

> The "legitimate press" first showed renewed signs of interest in UFOs in early 1951 when Bob Ginna of *Life* magazine came out to ATIC. He met Al Chop at the AMC PIO office, and came over. He was introduced to Red Honaker and Jim Rodgers. They gave him the pitch about thoroughly investigating everything and having a top notch project. Actually, nothing was being done and they couldn't even find the files on the sightings he asked about. They attempted to "snow" him, but I found out later they hadn't done it. All it did was to make him suspicious as hell. This visit scarred ATIC. [Ruppelt may mean "scared"—either word is correct.]

Ginna went away, but he didn't lose interest. He poked around the subject of UFOs for several months. In the spring of 1952 he and Bradford Darrach published one of the most influential articles of all time on the subject of UFOs ("Have We Visitors from Outer Space?" *Life*, April 7). Ruppelt describes it as such:

> The *Life* article undoubtedly threw a harder punch at the American public than any other UFO article ever written. The title alone, "Have We Visitors From Outer Space?" was enough. Other very reputable magazines such as *True* had said it before, but coming from *Life* it was different. *Life* didn't say that the UFO's were from outer space; it just said maybe. But to back up this "maybe" it had quotes from some famous people. Dr. Walther Riedel, who played an important part in the development of the German V-2 missile and presently the director of rocket engine research for North American Aviation Corporation, said he believed that the UFO's were from outer space. Dr. Maurice Biot, one of the world's leading aerodynamicists, backed him up.
>
> But the most important thing about the *Life* article was the question in the minds of so many readers, "Why was it written?" *Life* doesn't go blasting off on flights of space fancy without a good reason. Some of the readers saw a clue in the author's comments that the hierarchy of the Air Force was now taking a serious look at UFO reports. "Did the Air Force prompt *Life* to write the article?" was the question that many people asked themselves.
>
> When I got back to Dayton, newspapermen were beating down the door. The official answer to the *Life* article was released through the Office of Public Information in the Pentagon: "The article is factual, but *Life*'s conclusions are their own." In answer to any questions about the article being Air Force inspired, my "weasel worded" answer was that we had furnished *Life* with some raw data on specific sightings.
>
> My answer was purposely "weasel worded" because I knew that the Air Force had unofficially inspired the *Life* article. The "maybe they're interplanetary" with the "maybe" bordering on "they are," was the personal opinion of several very high ranking officers in the Pentagon—so high that their personal opinion was almost policy. I knew the men and I knew that one of

them, a general, had passed his opinions on to Bob Ginna.

We now know who that general was, how high he ranked, and how powerful his influence was on Air Force UFO policy.

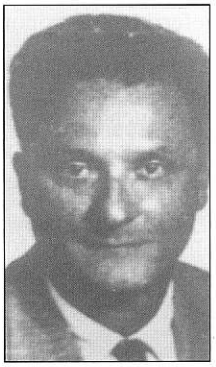
Just to complete (what I know anyway) about the Garland-Ginna connection, here again is Ed Ruppelt:

> In about March of 1952, Bob Ginna came back to ATIC, cleared by the Director of Intelligence to complete his UFO story. He had been all over the U.S. writing it. I couldn't contribute a lot except to assure him that ATIC was doing a better job than they were when he first visited ATIC. This saved the AF from a big blast in *Life*, I understand. Bob got most of his story from Gen. Garland (good sources told me) "off the record." General Garland was hot about UFOs and possibly gave Bob a somewhat warped picture.
>
> I was given "inferred orders" to play down UFOs, which didn't fit with General Garland's story [to Ginna]. This also led Ginna to believe that there was something big. . . .
>
> The *Life* article of 3 [actually, 7] April 1952: It concluded that UFOs were from outer space. Bob Ginna had done a lot of researching and had dug up a lot of good info. It was the best article on the subject that has been written, except for the final conclusion.

Some significant portion of that "good info" was from Garland. One intuits that the extraterrestrial probability, although it made Ruppelt nervous, did *not* displease the General.

## Stefan Possony

There was a second strong presence at the top of the Air Force Intelligence Directorate, a man who is as shadowy (or more so) than Garland, and about whom little has been written. I refer to Stefan Possony, a political scientist from the Georgetown graduate school.



*Stefan T. Possony*

Possony was born in 1913 in Vienna, Austria, and had a conservative Catholic upbringing. He also had a deep emotional dislike of atheism and, as a consequence, Soviet communism. He graduated from the University of Vienna in 1935 with a Ph.D. in political science, then edited the journal *Stürm über Österreich* from 1936–39. In 1938 he published the book *Die Wehrwirtschaft des totalen Krieges* [*Tomorrow's War*] and was becoming an expert on military tactics, both in regards to weaponry and psychology.

He fled to France ahead of Hitler's invasion, and served as a consultant to the Air Ministry, as well as a propagandist on Radio-Free Austria. In late 1940 he came to the United States where he was welcomed as a political science expert with emphasis on war and psychology at the Institute for Advanced Studies at Princeton (1941–42). Near the end of that appointment, he was asked (with about 50 others) to serve on a committee to study what was to be done with all the permanently displaced people (Jews of course, but others as well), who would be homeless, even countryless, following the war. This, the "M Project," lasted from 1942 to 1945 at the request of FDR. There were 17 persons on the somewhat permanent staff, 10 of whom were the Think Tank. Possony was one of these. Among the strangest aspects of their final report was a brief speculation on the possibilities of colonizing other planets, interstellar migration, and beings living elsewhere in space.

Whether Possony had anything to do with the latter discussion or not, as a core member he was familiar with it, and his later behavior shows an interest in UFOs certainly compatible with it. From 1943 to 1945 he was at the Office of Naval Intelligence, heading up a psychological warfare desk again. When the war ended, he received an appointment in the graduate school of Georgetown University in "Geopolitics and International Politics," as he wrote on a vita. In 1949 he published *Strategic Air Power*, and was by then well within the sphere of Pentagon intelligence circles. In 1952, he served as a faculty member at the National War College. He had a G-15 rating and worked for the Air Force as an intelligence specialist from 1946 to 1961.

For our purposes, Possony's connections with something called the USAF Special Studies Group (SSG) are the greatest interest. Others doubtless know much more about the secret group than I (and I wish that they would publish a good comprehensive review article on it), but this is what I believe I know:

1. Although the Air Force says "the Special Studies Group was organized in January 1953 and became known as the Special Advisory Group in 1958," this starting date is certainly incorrect. *Maybe* there is some pseudotruth in it as regards an unofficial earlier status or some minor name change, but the Special Studies Group surely existed as early as 1951.

2. The Air Force says, "The major function of the Special Studies Group was to investigate and provide suggested courses of action on highly specialized intelligence problems with both short and long range implications." I believe that this describes exactly the function of the SSG, and in that it was analogous to the old MCIAXO-designated Special Projects branch at Air Materiel Command in 1947, under which the UFO project (Sign) naturally fell.

3. Ruppelt first interacted with Possony in late 1951 on the subject of UFOs. Ruppelt had collected the UFO data for the Samford/Garland briefing that he was ordered to give, and somehow he already knew that Stefan Possony was someone that he was wise to pass the info by for a critique before he went to the briefing.

4. By the spring of 1952 at the latest, there was an office very like the SSG, with Stefan Possony as the intellec-

tual head, Lt. Col. E. Sterling as the military head, and Leslie Rosenzweig as Possony's assistant. It seemed to be functioning out of a special projects (AFOIN-X) branch that reported directly to Gen. Garland through a Col. Kieling. Col. H. J. Kieling was a highly placed Air Force intelligence operative who had worked in former Director Cabell's office. The SSG, one might assume, worked immediately under Samford and Garland, and, as Ruppelt said, "had a direct channel to Samford."

Ruppelt says this about Possony and the SSG:

> Steve was pretty much sold on the whole things [i.e., UFOs as real, technological phenomena]. He did a lot of investigating on his own hook and he had Father Hayden [*sic:* Hyden], the astronomer, as his special consultant. Steve and his crew used to cruise all over the U.S. and Europe, and during these travels they picked up a lot of UFO data. . . .
>
> Possony didn't much care what he said, and he used to go to battle with any or all of the more vocal skeptics.

So what exactly were Possony and the SSG doing? Ruppelt says this about Possony and his assistant Rosenzweig:

> Les Rosenzweig worked for Possony. He was sort of a dull tool, and whenever Possony said or did anything Les took it as gospel. When it came to UFOs there was no difference. Les made quite a few studies on how UFO's could be powered, how they could be contacted, and many equally outlandish things. He pushed the idea of using a huge horizontal movie screen to flash messages to the UFO's.

Rather amazing. Here was a special project, located right in the Director of Intelligence office, wondering about how to best contact UFOs.

A document released through FOIA tells us a bit more. Dated April 29, 1952, it was a "Memorandum for Record" to justify a trip by Sterling and Possony to Europe to study any possible relationship between the Soviets and UFOs. (I have become a little paranoid about the possibility of phony documents, even via FOIA, but this one was obtained, I believe, by FOIA researcher par excellence Robert Todd and given to FOIA collector par excellence Barry Greenwood, so I'm going to trust it. Regardless of its origin, however, the *content* of this document rings true to the business of Possony and the SSG.) The document says in part:

> The Special Study Group has undertaken a comprehensive study of Russian capabilities in the field of advanced aerial delivery systems. This study is expected to determine the nature of such systems, their strategic implications, and probable timetables as to development and operational availability. As an important side product, it is hoped that some much needed light can be shed on the vexing "flying saucer" problem. . . .
>
> According to present plans, the study consists of the following broad categories: Advanced jet bombers of conventional configuration; ballistic and glide type missiles, as well as manned aircraft of unconventional design; orbital missile (including the Sanger global range bombing system), and orbital bombing platforms, and flying saucers. . . .
>
> In connection with flying saucers, the Group is attempting to develop a proper framework for fruitful analysis. The Air Force cannot assume that flying saucers are of non-terrestrial origin, and hence, they could be Soviet.

That last sentence is stunning. On the document, the prefix "non-" is penned in—just what we don't need in this zero-defects world of ufology. But I believe that the "non-" is correctly so added by the drafter, *because the sentence makes no grammatical sense without it.* The "non-" therefore is real so long as the document is real. And what are the implications of *that*? I find it difficult to read that paragraph as stating anything but that it is the strong, majority view of high Air Force intelligence staff that the saucers *are* extraterrestrial. Possony says, we can't *assume* that, so they *could* be Soviet. But from the language and what we know about him, we understand that he didn't believe that "could" had much chance at all.

Possony goes on to cite the famous Commander McLaughlin balloon researchers' UFO report (from White Sands, New Mexico, in 1949), and gives calculated velocities and rate-of-climb of the object. He writes, "It frequently has been stated that such velocities cannot be produced on earth. Such a statement is correct insofar as our current engineering skills go, but it appears incorrect with respect to theoretical knowledge. . . . The fact must be stressed that the speed recorded by the theodolite is slightly higher than the speed required for the escape from the gravitational pull of the earth."

He next questions the extraterrestrial hypothesis by referring to astronomers not seeing these things coming and going and certain difficulties in braking vehicles over short distances. Possony also wonders why we haven't had contact much earlier than this, if there are spacefarers nearby. Having cast enough doubt on what seemed a sure thing early in the document, he then goes about making a thin case for saucers—some of them anyway—being Soviet. He then specifically asks for travel to Germany, France, Italy, the UK, and Austria (a trip home?). The request is initialed by Sterling, and signed by Kieling and Garland.

The document looks authentic to me, and the contents and signatories make sense. If so, the astonishing frankness of the statements by Possony are, well, astonishing. More important, they indicate a second very powerful pro-UFO force at the top of Air Force intelligence in 1952, among other years.

The pro-UFO attitudes and powers at the top carried their influence all the way down the relevant officer "stack" to the UFO analysis desk, manned by Maj. Dewey Fournet.

*Al Chop, Dewey Fournet, and Ed Ruppelt*

Just on top of him was Col. Weldon Smith (very pro-UFO); on top of Smith was Col. W. A. Adams (very pro-UFO). All these officers were in the Topical Intelligence Division of Intelligence Estimates. The chief, or deputy director of Estimates, was Col. Edward H. Porter, one of the most anti-UFO officers in Gen. Samford's directorate. But Porter is the exception that proves the rule, as he was constantly being reprimanded (even by Samford himself) for his closed-mindedness.

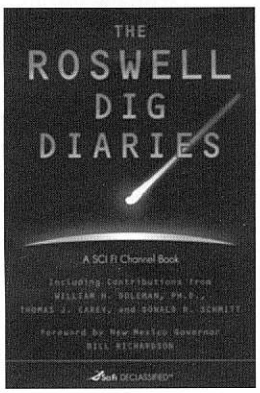
To this Pentagon came the young Lt. Ruppelt to give a briefing on whether the UFO project should continue. They said yes. Gee, what a surprise. Not only that, but they were very supportive for looking at these things and being willing to consider even extraterrestrials. Back at Wright-Patterson, Project Blue Book was going to be a happier place.

Then a confused Donald Keyhoe came along and perceived that something odd—a sudden lightening of attitude toward UFOs—was going on at the Pentagon. There was more cooperation, one might almost say "leaks." What was it all about, he must have wondered. Why was Al Chop so friendly? Why was this Dewey Fournet so unlike the old guy, Jere Boggs? Keyhoe stumbled through the year, which he wrote about in *Flying Saucers from Outer Space*, almost but never quite sensing the full truth. The names Garland and Possony never came down from their airy levels to the Public Information desk. But their ghosts were there.

In a way, paradoxically, it may have been a shame that the 1952 flap was so intense. What would ufology have been like if that Pentagon had been able to solidify its attitude toward UFOs, rather than being driven crazy and paranoid by swamped communications lines, presidential concerns, CIA investigations, and the Robertson Panel?

Read Keyhoe's book with the above in mind—it's interesting. And if you have material on Garland, Possony, and the SSG that you'd like to share, let me know. The level of seriousness that the Air Force gave to UFOs and the extraterrestrial hypothesis in 1952 is a fascinating business. ✦

## The Roswell Dig Diaries




The Sci Fi Channel has signed a three-book deal with Pocket Books for projects spun off from their original documentary specials. The first title will be *The Roswell Dig Diaries* (Pocket Books, July 6, 2004; 304 pages, $14.95), based on the Sci Fi Channel's highest-rated original special, "The Roswell Crash: Startling New Evidence," which documented the groundbreaking archaeological excavation of the Roswell crash site. *The Roswell Dig Diaries* was released this summer to coincide with the anniversary of the Roswell incident, which occurred the first week in July 1947.

The book reveals never-before-seen information about the 1947 Roswell crash and contains the first public release of the final archaeological report on the landmark dig. It also contains a special foreword by New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson.

The Roswell incident has become one of the most enduring mysteries in the history of ufology and the Sci Fi Channel recently reopened the case. Archaeologists from the University of New Mexico, in partnership with the Sci Fi Channel, set out to uncover conclusive physical evidence. UNM's final report and the personal journals—including those written by project leader Dr. Bill Doleman, authors/investigators Thomas J. Carey and Donald R. Schmitt, and Sci Fi Channel Senior Vice President of Programming Thomas Vitale—are presented here for the first time.

From Don Schmitt's journal: "We left Roswell in the early morning for a 10 a.m. meeting with Frank Joyce, who had been a radio announcer back in 1947. Joyce was driving down from Albuquerque to point out the site of the long-abandoned town of Lon. According to Joyce, Lon was where Mack Brazel was hid for a time by the military. 10 a.m. came and went and Frank had yet to arrive, so we proceeded to the Corona debris site. As all involved can testify, this is a site devoid of marked roads and landmarks. So imagine our surprise when who should arrive an hour later but good old Frank Joyce! Though it had been more than 50 years since he has ventured to the now-famous site, the area had left quite an impression on him."

*Don Schmitt and Tom Carey on the way to the Sci Fi Channel archaeological dig.*

The author, Michael McAvennie, is a freelance writer who lives with his wife and family in New York City. ✦

# SKEPTICAL FAILURES DOWN MEXICO WAY

BY MARK RODEGHIER

In May 2004 we learned about a dramatic UFO sighting by the crew of a Mexican military aircraft over the state of Campeche. By now, most *IUR* readers will have heard or read some news of this event, which was covered widely by mainstream news media, including CNN. The reason for the coverage is not hard to fathom: The Mexican defense department had publicly released details of the sighting and pronounced it unidentified after its own internal investigation. In these days of a lack of overt official interest in UFOs, a government admitting that its own pilots saw a UFO (actually 11 of them) that could not be identified is real news.

*Three of the crew who witnessed the event*

This episode also demonstrated that a key reason the serious press ignores the UFO phenomenon is because its study is not officially sanctioned. But that can change instantly when the establishment—a government, respected institution, or the academic world—treats the subject as something serious and unknown.

The excitement over the Mexican case was real in the UFO community because it involved physical evidence of an unusual kind. On the late afternoon of March 5, 2004, a Mexican Air Force C26A propeller-driven plane was flying a drug interdiction and surveillance mission near Ciudad del Carmen. This was a standard mission for the crew, and they flew in this area often. In addition to radar, the plane carried an infrared video camera, used to detect the heat from drug-smuggling airplanes flying at night without lights. The camera operates at wavelengths beyond that which the human eye can detect. The crew used this equipment regularly on their missions.

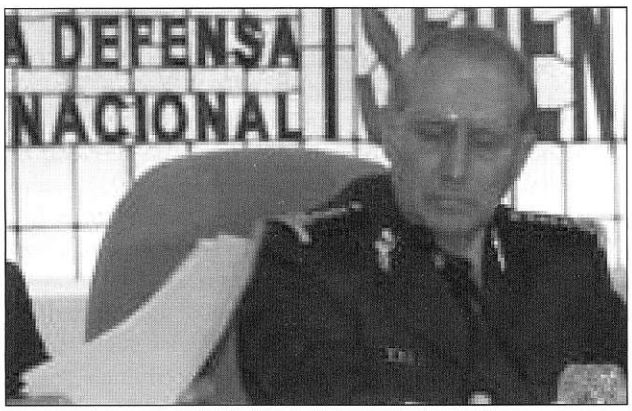
The plane initially encountered one or two UFOs that were detected in the infrared and on radar. The sighting lasted about 30 minutes, and during this time, a diverse number of UFOs were seen, in various directions around the plane. At one point, 11 UFOs surrounded the aircraft.

The UFOs were more easily detected with the infrared video than on radar. In the infrared, the UFOs appeared as large blobs, but it was difficult to determine their distance or size. Although the visibility was excellent and weather conditions were favorable, with the usual cumulus clouds of the tropics, the crew was unable to see the UFOs! There have been many UFO cases where a UFO was seen on radar but couldn't be located visually, but this case is unique. It can be classified as a radar, nonvisual, infrared-photo case. J. Allen Hynek never dreamed of such things when developing his famous report classification system.

The UFOs may have been invisible to the crew because they were very small (but giving off lots of energy in the infrared) or because they gave off very little visible light, no matter their size. Each of these would be intriguing. The main point, though, is that although the crew couldn't see the UFOs, they were recorded on the infrared video system. (Unfortunately, the radar was not being recorded, as is true for many aircraft.) Thus there is physical evidence available for study as well as the statements of the crew.

The Mexican military conducted an investigation over the next month or so, but was unable to determine a cause for the anomalous infrared and radar readings. The UFOs were obviously not hostile, and they weren't running drugs. So although the military couldn't explain the incident, it didn't appear to be a matter of national security. Unlike the likely behavior of his counterparts in the United States, the United

*Mark Rodeghier is scientific director of the J. Allen Hynek Center for UFO Studies in Chicago.*




*Secretary of Defense Gen. Ricardo Clemente Vega*

Kingdom, or other Western nations, Secretary of Defense Gen. Ricardo Clemente Vega decided to release details about the sighting to the press. For this he deserves high praise. He chose Jaime Maussan, a journalist who has been reporting on UFOs for many years. While we might question exactly how and to whom Vega Garcia released the report, it is understandable that he would give it to someone in Mexico. And then the fun began.

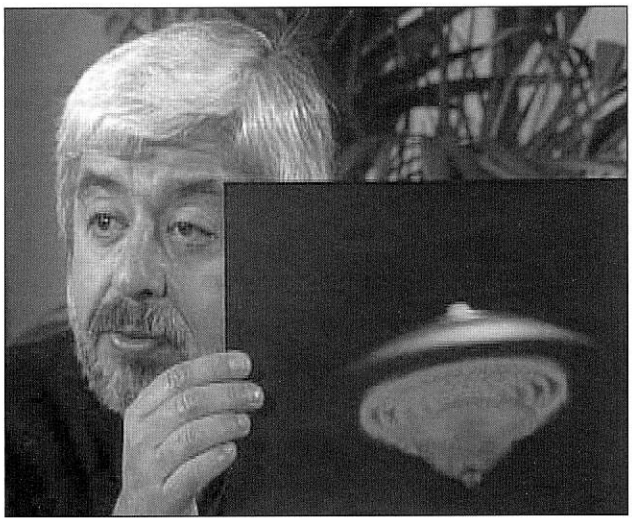
## The Skeptics Hit the Fan

As I noted above, the minute that Jaime Maussan released the information he had received to the wider press, news about the case was spread around the world. At that point, serious ufologists were interested but refrained from making any comments on the case, except to say it was certainly interesting and unique and deserved very careful study. And as this is written, no serious ufologist has yet pronounced this case as unidentified (or as explained, for that matter). How could we, since the infrared video has not yet been completely analyzed and the crew has not been independently interviewed? And because many details of the case are still unclear, we have not attempted to provide a detailed report in *IUR*.

Skeptics and debunkers, though, are scarcely restrained by matters of evidence or the need for investigation. The case details were barely released when various authorities in Mexico began tossing skeptical explanations into the air, hoping that one would stick. From north of the border it seemed that there must have been a competition underway, with bonus points being awarded for the most nonsensical explanation that could be heaved up most quickly. There were several contenders for the crown.

Skeptics can't stand a vacuum—an unexplained UFO case that is getting public attention—and so are driven to suggest explanations that don't stand up to even a few minutes of scrutiny. Normally, one or two skeptics attack a UFO case, but in this instance, a half-dozen gave it a try. This made things even more amusing because their explanations could not all be true, and they were so mutually contradictory.

The skeptical explanations were mostly congruent with



*Jaime Maussan*

the background, training, and experience of those proffering the suggestion. Thus a Mexican astronomer suggested that the UFOs could have been meteorites. On the other hand, Rafael Navarro González of the Plasma Chemistry and Planetary Study Laboratory of the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) stated that the UFOs were likely "space junk" burning up upon reentry. At least these two explanations are similar in that they both involve stuff burning up in the atmosphere. But keeping in mind that the crew's UFO sighting lasted for about 30 minutes, and that the UFOs flew around the plane, you can judge for yourself how sensible these two explanations are.

Julio Herrera Velazquez, a nuclear science researcher also at UNAM, teamed up with colleagues, including Navarro (who was allowed two entries in the skeptics' contest) to suggest that the pilots had filmed ball lightning. Since there were no thunderstorms in the area, and given the long duration of the sighting, and the number of UFOs, this was another farfetched explanation. In fact, Herrera's ball lightning theory was soon undercut by Alberto Hernández Unzón of Mexico's Servicio Meteorológico Nacional office, who explained that conditions were not at all favorable for ball lightning formation over Campeche that day. Hernández, to his credit, also made clear that no other meteorological explanation made sense.

No collection of skeptical explanations would be complete without including weather balloons, and the Sociedad Astronómica Urania in the state of Morelos obliged just two days after news of the sighting broke. Since balloons would be easy to observe visually in the day, and they aren't flown in formations of 11, and don't move at over 200 mph, this explanation was just as goofy. And Hernández from the weather office shot down the balloons, as he was quick to note that there were no weather balloons flown that day in the area.

It is worth noting in passing that the skeptics' explanations implicitly faulted the Mexican authorities who had analyzed the sighting data and the crew who had the sight-

*(continued on page 28)*

# UFO SECRECY AND THE LAW

BY DONALD R. BURLESON

In the field of UFO studies as in other realms of human interest, the tendency of the United States government (among other governments) to withhold information from the public is an ongoing and aggravating problem. Instinctively, one is aware that people have an innate right to know a great deal more than the government allows us to know. We can be sure, in fact, that there are exceedingly important subjects about which we are permitted to know next to nothing at all, particularly regarding UFO matters. As Whitley Strieber has so aptly observed in this connection, "Everything important is classified."

While those who do not believe in the reality of UFOs may think the whole notion of governmental secrecy about them amounts to nothing more than ill-founded speculation or conspiracy-theory paranoia, it is in fact easy to establish—on the basis of work done by serious and competent researchers in the field—that military and governmental agencies have indeed concealed vast amounts of UFO information from the public.

One need look no further than the results obtained by Bruce Maccabee (see his *UFO-FBI Connection*, Llewellyn, 2000) in prying documents out of the Federal Bureau of Investigation via the Freedom of Information Act. It is significant that the FBI repeatedly claimed to have no interest in the investigation of UFOs, yet when Maccabee persevered in requesting pertinent documents, they eventually released some 1,600 pages of UFO-related material. (Pretty good pickings, for an agency having no interest in the subject!) Some of it was partly redacted, but all in all these documents are very revealing of a long-standing FBI involvement in UFO investigation, an involvement that has entailed extensive exchanges of correspondence with the U.S. Air Force.

The sad fact is that the FBI only released this information under duress after a legitimate procedure of requests under FOIA more or less forced the disclosure. Given that one does not normally see open and willing publication of such information on the part of the U.S. government (which is, after all, arguably the most prolific publishing concern in the world), and given that large numbers of documents do turn out to have existed in official files for many years but have come to be known only when their release has been won with considerable difficulty, one must conclude that the official policy is much more inclined toward the concealment than toward the public sharing of UFO information. If such documents can in the end be turned over for public scrutiny when requested, one must ask why they were not shared earlier with a public to whom they could all along have been revealed without harmful consequences. The only conclusion is that it is the dominant proclivity of government to hide what it knows, especially with regard to UFOs, which have been the object of intense governmental study for many decades, but about which the government says as little as possible.

## SECRET UFO DOCUMENTS EXIST

Maccabee's treasure-trove of released documents is by no means the only indication of how much concealed UFO information exists. Other researchers have succeeded in obtaining release of large numbers of documents as well. Clifford Stone, as a notable example, has ferreted tens of thousands of pages of UFO-related documents out of a variety of agencies, including the CIA. (See his *UFOs Are Real*, S.P.I. Books, 1997.) As always with such materials, many of these documents are rather heavily redacted, a tendency that in itself speaks loudly of a governmental inclination toward secrecy. (One such document in Stone's book, a CIA memo dated April 14, 1976, shows a reference, in a line legible between redaction blocks, to someone's having sought "guidance from CIA UFO experts as to material in his report that should remain classified." One does not hear the CIA going about proclaiming loudly that they have had UFO experts on their payroll, yet the memo suggests that they have. The document in question bears a subject line that reads: "CASE [case name or number redacted] - UFO RESEARCH.")

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Any discussion of the topic of government secrecy would be remiss without mention of the efforts of researcher John Greenewald Jr., whose Black Vault operation (www.bvalphaserver.com) has yielded over *100,000 pages* of government documents. This material spans numerous areas of concern, including nuclear weapons, spy satellites, terrorism, cloning, mind control, and international relations, as well as the question of UFOs. (See Greenewald's *Beyond UFO Secrecy*, Black Vault, 2002.) If anyone were foolish enough to doubt that the government keeps secrets in a massive way, he or she would need only to examine the Black Vault files to be roundly persuaded otherwise.

But it is not only through documents released under FOIA that one gains glimpses into the preference of government agencies for secrecy in UFO matters. Field investigation of UFO cases has repeatedly painted the same picture, in that one often sees large amounts of witness testimony standing in stark contrast to official pronouncements. One readily thinks of hundreds of reliable witnesses in the Roswell case of 1947, people who give consistent and plausible accounts of having seen crash debris or alien bodies, and who in many cases have been threatened to keep silent about what they have seen. The threats have been many and varied. The management team of Roswell radio station KGFL was actually threatened with immediate loss of their broadcast license if they aired the tape of Walt Whitmore's interview with Mack Brazel—and this in violation of all standard procedure for delicensing radio stations in cases where just cause exists. Clearly, violation of the FCC's own policies was not at all out of the question in 1947, when secrecy was an issue.

A government inclined to be open about UFO data could well afford to publish some admissions, however limited or circumspect, to the effect, at least, that government agencies are aware that UFOs exist and that, by virtue of an extensive web of evidence, some of the public's experiences are not mundanely explainable. Instead, we get only such disingenuous publications as the Air Force's celebrated *Roswell Report: Case Closed*, a stonewalling pseudostudy that was timed to try to defuse the 50th-anniversary observation in Roswell in 1997, and that offered only facile "nothing happened in Roswell" arguments readily problematized by a mass of well-correlated witness testimony. One has to ask: Where's the logic here? If nothing happened in Roswell, why bother to issue such verbose denials? One has to ask as well: Whom should we believe, the government or the witnesses? The question is especially pertinent when one realizes that in most cases the witnesses not only have no reason to lie but actually may be giving their accounts at risk (at least risk of ridicule, if not worse) to themselves, whereas military and governmental agencies have every self-serving reason to dissemble, considering that they have a history of secret-keeping that goes back many years and has involved threats to private citizens and worse.

One could cite examples endlessly. When I reopened the Levelland, Texas, UFO case of November 2–3, 1957, my wife Mollie and I discovered two independent witnesses testifying to the existence of physical trace evidence in that case—in particular, witnesses to a "burn ring" apparently responsible for the death of a number of cattle— and found evidence that Sheriff Clem had been sharply admonished by both the FBI and the Air Force to "drop it" and never talk about anything he had seen or heard (*see* "Levelland, Texas, 1957: Case Reopened," *IUR,* Spring 2003, pp. 3–6, 25). What does one believe: The testimony of these witnesses (and the testimony of the original witnesses who saw a large, oval object land on the highway in several places), or government pronouncements to the effect that what people saw on the roadways around Levelland was "ball lightning"? As ridiculous as the official explanation was and is, to my knowledge not an official word has ever been published modifying that explanation or admitting that people in and around Levelland on that night in 1957 might indeed have seen something not readily accounted for. In short, the military and the government sat on the facts about Levelland in 1957, and are sitting on them to this day. Secretiveness has become the rule rather than the exception in government, particularly where the facts about UFOs are concerned.

## Agencies still interested in UFOs

Documents obtained from the FBI, CIA, and other agencies make it clear that, despite everything they might say to the contrary, these agencies were deeply involved in UFO investigation from the late 1940s through at least the 1970s. A more troubling question is: What have they been doing with regard to UFOs since that time?

According to them, nothing. They routinely claim to have no interest in the subject, and where at one time FOIA requests did prove otherwise, UFO investigators (myself included) who submit FOIA requests nowadays quite often receive only responses to the effect that the agency in question has no knowledge of any such information and no pertinent documents to release, even in cases where the requesting investigator has plenty of reason to suppose that the agency does have the documents. The "party line" with many military and governmental agencies is that UFOs do not officially exist and that no one in officialdom is doing any work on them, or has any information to share—or even any information *not* to share! Agencies present this kind of picture to the public even when they must know perfectly well that the public knows better.

Indeed, we are apparently expected to believe that agencies who were demonstrably involved in UFO lore for at least 30 years are all of a sudden wholly indifferent to the UFO question and are, in fact, of the opinion that there is no such thing as an unidentified flying object except in the minds of fanatics or cultists. Never mind that, as everyone in such organizations as the Center for UFO Studies and the Mutual UFO Network knows, sighting reports continue to

come in almost daily. And never mind that this situation implies (if one accepts the official cant) that the government is supremely indifferent to an ongoing phenomenon that the public is well aware of and that, one would have to assume, could well affect national security and international relations.

Ironically, this modern-day disavowal *itself* is an indication of the extent to which official agencies have come to embrace a paradigm of secrecy, particularly when logic demands that a phenomenon well-known to the public must be one well-known to the government too, so that their claimed lack of interest can scarcely be the true state of things. In effect, government agencies not only want to hide things now; they want to hide the fact that they hide things. They want everyone to believe that they have *never* had any interest in the subject, but in order to believe that, one would have to have a defective memory or simply be ignorant of long-established facts.

Perhaps one of the best UFO cases to cite, to show that the regime of secrecy has continued well beyond the "classic years" of UFO sightings, is the case of the Phoenix Lights (March 13, 1997). Considering that various threads of witness testimony have put the Phoenix object at anywhere from a mile to two miles in width, officials at nearby Luke Air Force Base certainly strained everyone's credulity by claiming that they not only saw nothing on radar that night (time for a visit by the repairman, perhaps?) but also did not even get any phone calls from the public about the sightings. It was gratifying and amusing to see Peter Davenport, speaking one night at the International UFO Museum and Research Center in Roswell, project his own telephone bill onto a screen, showing that he had called the air base several times that night himself, though they would claim total ignorance of the event; in short, he had caught them in an out-and-out lie.

He also shared a speculation with us that has chilling implications, if true. It seems that March 13, 1997, was also the night on which then President Clinton had to be rushed from Florida (where he was visiting a friend) back to Washington for major surgery to treat a badly injured knee, the cover story being that he had "slipped on the carpet." Since witnesses have testified that a number of military installations went on alert that night (in fact going directly from DefCon 5 to DefCon 3), it is plausible to speculate, as Davenport does, that the president was injured in the hasty process of getting him back to the White House in the midst of a gravely serious national security alert, an alert of which the public has been told nothing whatever. Quite possibly, therefore, an American president may have been injured (indirectly) because of a UFO event.

Whether this is true or not (and I am inclined to suspect that it is), the fact remains that the official powers were and are untruthful on the subject of the Phoenix Lights. It is very telling that no news coverage of the event appeared until some three months later, and the official explanation, even then, was that the lights people saw that night in and around Phoenix were military flares being dropped many miles away—as if anyone wouldn't know what flares looked like. (They certainly don't form a huge, opaque object that blots out the whole sky to the observer.) Obviously, official secret-keeping, even when it waxes absurd, has long since become a way of life.

## No Legal Basis for Secrecy

The question naturally arises, then: What is the legal basis for this pervasive and seemingly eternal secrecy?

One may do worse than to look first to the foundation of all legitimately based American law, the United States Constitution. Quite possibly the finest sociopolitical document ever written, the Constitution (though presenting enough problems of interpretation to keep crowds of constitutional lawyers busily employed forever) is succinct and relatively straightforward, and it is no difficult matter to read it in search of references to the right of government to keep secrets.

But one will find this harvest amazingly thin. There is, in fact, only one overt constitutional reference to secrecy. Article I, Section 5, states, among the duties of the Houses of Congress: "Each House shall keep a journal of its proceedings, and from time to time publish the same, excepting such parts as may in their judgment require secrecy." This is of course a far cry from the wholesale keeping of secrets in the manner in which, and to the extent to which, government has come to keep them, so that for all practical purposes we may say that the Constitution says nothing about secret keeping at all, or at any rate nothing of significance to the present inquiry.

It follows that if the government has any legal basis at all for withholding UFO-related information (or indeed any information) from the public, that basis must lie in statutory law subsequent to the Constitution. But here one is astonished to find that virtually no such laws have ever been passed.

It is instructive to read the *Congressional Record* for May 7, 1997, to see the efforts of Senators Daniel Patrick Moynihan and Jesse Helms to pass what they called the Government Secrecy Act of 1997.

"Secrecy," Moynihan states in those proceedings, "is a form of government regulation." He quotes from Max Weber's essay *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* (*Economy and Society*) as follows:

> Every bureaucracy seeks to increase the superiority of the professionally informed by keeping their knowledge and intentions secret. Bureaucratic administration always tends to be an administration of "secret sessions"; in so far as it can, it hides its knowledge and action from criticism. The pure interest of the bureaucracy in power, however, is efficacious far beyond those areas where purely functional interests make for secrecy. *The concept of the "official secret" is the specific*

> *invention of bureaucracy* [emphasis added], and nothing is so fanatically defended by the bureaucracy as this attitude, which cannot be substantially defended beyond these specifically qualified areas.

Moynihan goes on to state for the record: "[S]ecrecy is the ultimate mode of regulation; the citizen does not even know that he or she is being regulated." And he throws down the challenge: "It is time to reexamine the foundations of that secrecy system." It is these foundations, if any, that are intriguing and problematical. Moynihan asks, if there have indeed been rules for keeping governmental secrets, "Were they laws? If not, then what?"

In his presentation of the proposed Secrecy Act, he points out what must to many people be an astonishing revelation: There has never really been a basis *in law* for the official keeping of secrets! "The system for classifying and declassifying national security information," he reminds us, "has been based in regulation, not in statute, and has been governed by six successive executive orders since 1951." (This includes, of course, former President Clinton's Executive Order 12958, the "Classified National Security Information" document of 1995 familiar to UFO researchers.) Moynihan's colleague Senator Helms similarly states that the proposed bill "would *for the first time* [emphasis added] place in statute the Government system for the classification of information. To date this has been accomplished solely through executive order."

Senators Moynihan's and Helms' concerns were well-founded. In effect they were saying that the government's overarching practice of keeping multitudes of secrets, whether necessarily or not, has always been based not on statutes but on orders issuing from the executive branch of government, and this clearly amounts to a serious constitutional issue in terms of the legally established functions of the various branches of government; it is the job of the legislative branch to make law, not the executive branch, yet the executive orders on government secrecy have been functioning as "the only law in the territory," as it were, in the absence of genuine and legitimately generated statutory law.

There are other examples, certainly, of presidential assumption of legislative prerogative; declaration of war is constitutionally reserved to Congress, but every war after World War II has been fought undeclared, in effect waged on presidential authority alone. Moynihan and Helms do not state the matter quite so strongly as to say outright that the executive branch has developed a history of infringing upon legislative branch functions, but the implications of their presentation are clear enough. Grave constitutional difficulties abound here, and the senators well knew it. Indeed, their whole effort to pass the Government Secrecy Act of 1997 was based on their awareness that there was, incredibly enough, a *statutory* vacuum with regard to this immensely important issue, and they wanted to try to do something about it.

In pleading their case for the Secrecy Act, they commented: "We must develop a competing culture of openness, fully consistent with our interests in protecting national security, but in which power is no longer derived primarily from one's ability to withhold information." Further, on this same point, they stated: "Developing a culture of openness within the Federal Government requires that secrecy be defined in statute." (One could add that defining secrecy policies in statute is necessary whether a "culture of openness" ever materializes or not.)

The senators expressed other concerns as well, beyond simply the absence of basic statutory definition with regard to secret keeping. While being careful to state that "the protection of true national security information remains vital to the well-being and security of the United States," they warned that the reasons for hiding information from the public might at times be less than defensible, even that "information may be classified to hide from public view illegal or unethical activity."

This must certainly strike a responsive chord with UFO researchers and investigators, as we are all well aware that government agencies (including the military) over the years have done some pretty desperate and unconscionable things to maintain the cloak of secrecy. Witnesses have been threatened, probably even killed. Broadcasters have been intimidated and, in effect, silenced in a manner one would more naturally expect to see in a totalitarian dictatorship. Official records have been destroyed without legal authority. Any number of questionable measures have been employed to withhold information about UFOs from the public. Whether Senators Moynihan and Helms had such things specifically in mind when they made their statements, it's hard to say, but their statements are right on the money in any case.

## Current Status

In the end their heroic efforts to do something about the official secrecy problem came to very little. The struggle went on, but by 2000–2001 Congress had agreed upon only a very watered-down "Public Information Declassification Act" accomplishing little more than authorizing an advisory board on declassification, a halfhearted measure providing no guarantee that any members would ever even be appointed to such a board, and falling a long way short of establishing a statutory basis for government security classification. The fact that Congress could ponder this problem for several years and accomplish so little rather tends to make one speculate (at the risk of being thought paranoid or hung up on conspiracy theory) that other forces, more darkly powerful, do not want the matter of high secrecy ever to become a matter of well-defined and responsible statutory imperative. Considering the nature of UFO-related information and the government's history of suppressing it, the stakes, for some, must after all be very high. There surely are persons and agencies in the dark corners of government who

can't *afford* to have the truth known, or even to have the process of keeping things secret transformed into something truly "legal." Such persons and agencies can get away with a great deal that would be considered illegal under any system of rational law, but the term "illegal" means very little in the absence of that kind of statutory base.

What of legal challenges to the blank wall of secrecy? As everyone knows, this has been tried. But, for example, when Citizens Against UFO Secrecy brought suit against the NSA to try to force them to release UFO-related documents, little was accomplished despite the valiant effort made. The information involved is so sensitive and so highly classified that with such events in court one runs into the problem that the attorneys can't even be in the room when evidence is presented!

The catch-22 in all this is that precisely *because* the matter of high secrecy has never really resided in the realm of statutory law, it appears that no one is legally responsible. We do have (thank heaven) the Freedom of Information Act, and on occasion that device has yielded excellent results, as we have seen. But all too often a government agency can simply lie about having documents that they would otherwise either have to release or have to admit they weren't releasing because of "national security" (Exemption One), a potential embarrassment to such an agency. I myself ran into this difficulty in attempting to force the CIA to release their wiretap transcripts of Marilyn Monroe's telephone conversations, transcripts they demonstrably possess but say they don't. It is exceedingly difficult to hold such agencies accountable for their actions, especially without an adequate matrix of law governing such matters.

Perhaps the best prospect for legal challenge is still to go back to the U.S. Constitution. While that document, as pointed out, contains practically no reference to government secrecy, there are areas constructively open to interpretation.

## An Argument from Property

We live in an age in which it has become well understood, in legal circles as well as in society at large, that under some circumstances at least, *information is property*. In fact, property in the form of information grows more extensive and more universally recognized all the time. Corporations fight tooth and nail to protect their proprietary rights to information-based ownership; lawsuits over these matters are won and lost practically every day. As we all know, companies constantly buy and sell marketing information in the form of names, addresses, email addresses, and phone numbers; a company can only sell what it owns in some sense, and what is owned is property by definition. (Literary texts such as novels and especially screenplays are always referred to as "properties.") And when one recalls that the Fifth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution states, "No person shall be . . . deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law," one must reflect upon the notion that information-based property falls under the umbrella of the term "property" every bit as solidly as the electronic media have come to be included under the term "the press" in the First Amendment (which makes the case of the suppression of radio station KGFL a violation of First Amendment rights, by the way).

Following this line of reasoning, one concludes that since there is abundant precedent to consider information as property, and since the government has withheld UFO-related information from the public *without due process of law*, then the government has deprived the people, collectively, of rightful property without due process, in violation of the Fifth Amendment. This deprivation *has* to be without due process because, as I have pointed out, there really *are* no laws, per se, governing the overall classification and dissemination of information on a statutory basis. How can there be "due process of law" without laws?

The UFO question is a matter of such fundamental importance that the people, as workers in the field of UFO studies have argued repeatedly, have every right to know the basic facts. Simply put, the people have a natural right to informational property of which we have, however, been deprived without due process of law because the disposition of such informational property has never been adequately provided with a statutory base of the sort that should be universally expected and demanded, and indeed *would* be demanded in most situations where legal clarifications were absent. If there were no laws about murder or theft, we would demand them; yet with the issue of governmental secrecy, the discrepancy of a statutory vacuum goes largely unheeded. And as long as this discrepancy exists, agencies of government may do pretty much as they please when it comes to withholding information from the public. This affects everyone interested in the UFO question in any way, and promises to affect everyone for the foreseeable future.

But, more optimistically, perhaps the doors to the closed rooms where all that hidden information resides may one day be opened on the basis of constitutional law. The "due process" argument appears to be an argument of promise. ✦


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# THE USE OF THERMOLUMINESCENCE FOR THE EVALUATION OF UFO LANDING SITE EFFECTS

BY EDWARD J. ZELLER

## FOREWORD BY MARK RODEGHIER

In the previous issue of *IUR* we reprinted a paper by Fred Merritt from the 1976 CUFOS conference proceedings on imprints left by a UFO landing. We continue to mine this rich resource by reprinting a paper by Dr. Edward J. Zeller about an interesting method to study UFO physical traces.

The study of physical evidence is of paramount importance for ufology. Although this has long been recognized, the field, in some respects, does less work on physical evidence today than it did in the 1970s. There are two main reasons. The 1970s—the immediate post-Condon era—saw many scientists take an active role in UFO research and investigation. Their involvement gradually declined, for several reasons, so that by the early 1980s, their contributions had greatly diminished. The other key dynamic was the large decrease in physical trace cases, which began in the late 1970s, around the world. Far fewer cases has naturally led to fewer serious investigations of physical evidence.

Zeller's contribution to the 1976 conference was about the phenomenon of thermoluminescence and how it could be used to study UFO traces. Thermoluminescence occurs when material that has previously been subjected to ionizing radiation, such as from gamma and x-rays or high-energy particles, is slowly heated. The material releases stored energy as visible light (luminescence), albeit at low levels. The stored energy comes from the ionizing radiation, which kicks some electrons up to higher energy states, where they remain rather than returning to their original state. This can occur only in crystalline materials, typically minerals with atoms in a lattice structure, as the lattice traps the higher energy electrons.

The use of thermoluminescence in UFO investigations is predicated on the idea that some UFOs emit ionizing radiation, and when close to or on the ground, this radiation will affect the soil and rocks as described above. Then later, the UFO investigator can take soil samples from the landing site and from nearby control sites, and by heating these samples, determine whether they have been subjected to ionizing radiation. This is possible even if there is no visible evidence of ionizing radiation, such as damaged vegetation.

Control samples are necessary because there is a natural flux of ionizing radiation from cosmic rays and underground radioactive sources, so all soil with the appropriate crystalline structure will exhibit some thermoluminescence. (For this reason, the phenomenon is now used for dating by historians and archaeologists.)

The use of thermoluminescence by Zeller is just one example of the many standard scientific techniques that could, and should, be appropriated by UFO researchers to study physical evidence. There are obvious things to do with a physical trace or at a landing site, such as take photographs and measurements. But in science, oftentimes the most important evidence is not visible to the eye, yet is the most powerful at telling us what might have occurred. I hope that we relearn this lesson from 25 years ago.

In his article, Zeller studies evidence from a case in Medford, Minnesota, that occurred on November 2, 1975. Because of his focus on the analysis of the soil, he didn't provide background on the sighting, which was investigated by J. Allen Hynek and a team from CUFOS. There were several sightings near Medford around November 2, and then a few days later in western Minnesota. (Medford is about 50 miles directly south of Minneapolis; three days later, the Travis Walton case took place in Arizona.) From the *CUFOS Bulletin* of February 1976, here is a summary of the sighting:

> Witnesses viewed a brilliant orange-red light, terribly bright, about one-half block away, one-quarter the size of an automobile. They saw the light go behind a large building, and suspected it landed in a football field behind the building. At that location, they found a bare spot, 12 feet square, of burned grass and ashy residue. There were no other marks on the ground or the field. At

*Edward Zeller (deceased) was professor of geology, physics, and astronomy at the University of Kansas in Lawrence for many years until his retirement in the 1990s. He was also a Scientific Board member of CUFOS.*

some distance they saw a red ball of light above the trees, and attempted to catch up with it with their car. It kept moving away from them.

This last thought. Even an investigation that determines that there is no enhanced thermoluminescence from a landing site is successful because it tells us something about the radiation, or lack thereof, from that particular UFO. It's one more thing we know about the UFO phenomenon.

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Thermoluminescence is a property of many common minerals which are present in soils and rocks. Usually abbreviated as TL, the term refers to the ability of these minerals to emit visible light when they are heated, through a temperature range from room temperature to red heat (roughly 400° C). When crystals of semiconductors or insulating materials are irradiated with X-rays, gamma rays, or high-energy particles, ionization results. Basically, this occurs when some of the energy of the incident radiation is transferred to the electrons of the lattice atoms, and these electrons are effectively knocked out of their normal positions. For a short period of time these energetic electrons are free to move about within the crystal structure of the mineral. Most of the free electrons return rapidly to their original energy states in the lattice atoms, but a few will become trapped at imperfections in the lattice itself. Impurities, missing atoms, and dislocations are all capable of trapping electrons. Since the trapped electrons retain some of the energy they got from the incident high-energy radiation, they are required to give up this energy if they make a transition from their traps to the lower energy states they occupied originally.

Heating causes the electrons to escape from their traps and the energy that is lost by the electrons is emitted as visible light. Once the sample has been heated and the electrons have been released from their traps, subsequent heating will not produce TL unless the sample has been subjected to an additional dose of ionizing radiation.

Almost all natural crystals are capable of acting as natural radiation dosimeters because they can show TL. In nature, the ionizing radiation which produces it comes primarily from included trace amounts of uranium and thorium. Potassium 40 may also be present as a major constituent in some minerals and it too can contribute to the total natural radiation background. Cosmic rays can also cause ionization but their contribution to the total natural TL is much less than that of the radioactive impurities. Any ionizing radiation which is artificially applied to the minerals tends to increase the TL above the natural levels present in the soil or rock. Conversely, any artificial heating will reduce the TL below that in the unheated material.

## Nature of the apparatus for the measurement of TL and sample preparation

For the purposes of this discussion, only a brief description of the apparatus for measuring TL will be included. The grains of the sample to be tested are distributed as uniformly as possible on a silver plate which is heated by nichrome heating coils at a rate of 1° C. per second, by an automatic heating-rate program controller. Light emitted by the sample is carried to a photomultiplier by means of a quartz light pipe, which is positioned 1 cm above the sample on the top of the electric furnace. The photomultiplier converts the light emitted by the sample to an electrical signal which is amplified and recorded on an X–Y recorder. Temperature is recorded on the X-axis and light intensity on the Y-axis. The glow-curve can be measured between room temperature and approximately 400° C., above which the furnace itself begins to glow in the visible spectrum to which the photomultiplier is sensitive.

Although the glow-curve measurement itself is completed in a short time, sample preparation prior to the measurement is often tedious and time-consuming. In the case of soil samples, organic matter must first be removed and as much as possible of the clay component of the soil must be washed out. It is imperative that all samples be examined under a microscope before TL runs are undertaken, in order to be sure that no substantial differences in mineralogical composition exist among samples from a specific site. Any major differences in mineral content in the samples is very likely to produce differences in the glow-curves, but these differences may not be related to UFO effects and conclusive results may be impossible to obtain.

## Application of TL to UFO landing sites

*1. **Detection of ionizing radiation.*** Because of the sensitivity of soil and rock-forming minerals to radiation, they can be used to evaluate UFO landing sites. If the UFO emits ionizing radiation while on or near the ground, the effects should be detectable in rock or soil samples. Radiation levels of approximately 10 Rad can be detected with ease in quartz-rich soils or sands. Figure 1 shows the form of the natural glow-curve of Kansas River sand. After irradiation with a dose of approximately 100 Rad from cobalt-60 gamma rays, a marked increase in the total TL intensity is observed. In addition, a small peak at roughly 110° C. is beginning to appear. This peak is never present in natural samples because it decays within a few days if the samples are kept at room temperature. The 110° C. glow-curve peak is found only in samples which are run within a period of a few days after irradiation or which are kept under refrigeration during the time between irradiation and measurement of TL.

*2. **Heating effects associated with UFO landing sites.*** UFO landing site traces sometimes include evidence of heating or burning of objects on the ground at the landing site. If sufficiently high temperatures are generated, it may be possible to detect these effects by observing a loss of TL in samples of rocks or soil. Figure 2 shows the effect of artificial heating in the laboratory of Kansas River sand. The untreated sample shows the maximum TL. Heating the

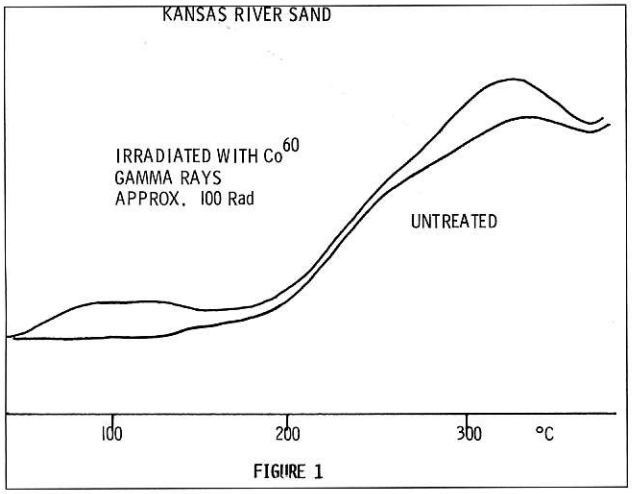


FIGURE 1

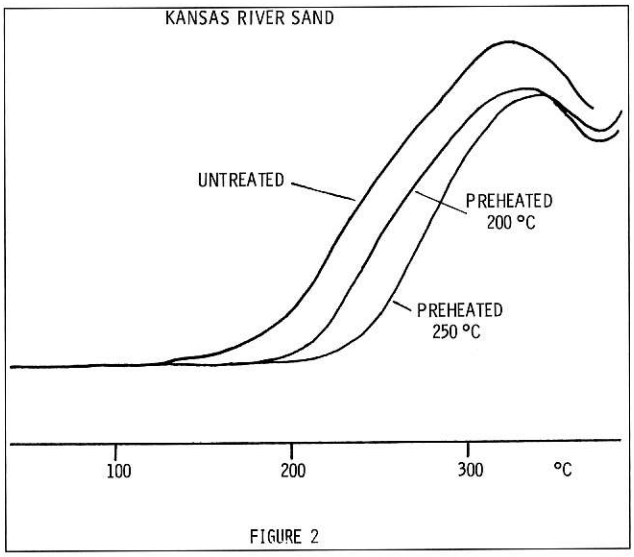


FIGURE 2

sample to 200° C. for approximately one minute results in a significant decrease in both peak height and area under the curve. An accompanying rise in the temperature at which the glow-curve peak occurs is also apparent. Heating the same material to 250° C. for one minute causes all of these trends to be further accentuated.

Temperatures high enough to cause ignition of organic matter are certainly adequate to produce changes in the TL but only if they are maintained long enough to permit the rock or soil actually to reach an elevated, temperature. Water saturated soils have a very high heat capacity and any heating effects are likely to be measurable by TL only if the soil is actually dried out by the UFO activity. Furthermore, both soil and rock tend to be poor conductors of heat, so that any observable effects are likely to be confined to the extreme surface of the material.

## Nature of the Samples Required for TL Evaluation

In order to make any practical use of TL in the evaluation of landing site traces it is necessary to determine what the average value of the TL in the soil or rock may have been prior to the landing occurrence. Unless this can be established with considerable accuracy, it is impossible to determine whether the variations which might be found are within the normal variability or whether they are truly anomalous. For this reason it is necessary to collect samples sufficiently far from the landing site that they cannot be expected to have been affected by the UFO. The necessity for the collection of these "background" samples cannot be overemphasized.

When sampling the affected area, care must be taken that specimen labeling is adequate to prevent any mix-up after the samples are returned from the field. Obviously, the area showing the maximum ground effect must be sampled with great care. A radial pattern or a grid of samples should be taken around the affected area and extending well beyond the region which shows the landing traces. By this means, any systematic variations in TL can most effectively be observed. If the approach and departure trajectories of the UFO are known and if they are close to the ground, samples should be collected along the flight path and at right angles to it.

Because even such penetrating radiations as X-rays and gamma rays are rapidly absorbed in soil or rock, the effects are likely to be most pronounced in the surface samples. Nevertheless, a sequence should be taken from the surface to 20 or 30 cm. Such a sequence would be especially valuable in establishing the nature of any anomalous TL effects which might be observed. In every case, samples should be collected as soon as possible after the sighting, and they should be kept under refrigeration until they reach the laboratory where the TL measurements are to be made.

Owing to the time involved in preparing samples, making TL runs and evaluating the results, investigators should be especially careful in selecting both sites and samples which are to be tested by this method. Only the best documented cases should be chosen, and specific attention should be devoted to sampling procedures in collecting material for the test. It is recognized that the nature of the UFO phenomenon is such that it probably precludes the collection of an ideal set of samples. At the same time, it is clear that the ultimate quality of any data obtained by TL evaluation is at least as dependent upon the field investigator as it is upon the laboratory technician.

## Test Case Evaluation

It seems appropriate to conclude this discussion with an example of some data obtained from a set of actual samples from a reported UFO landing site. The site was located at Medford, Minnesota, and consisted of a total of five sample locations. The soil is rich in quartz and apparently uniform in composition with no obvious microscopic differences among any of the samples. All samples were collected from the upper centimeter of the surface soil.

Figure 3 shows some of the results obtained, from the study. A pronounced difference is found between the TL of the site center and the site edge samples. The soil collected

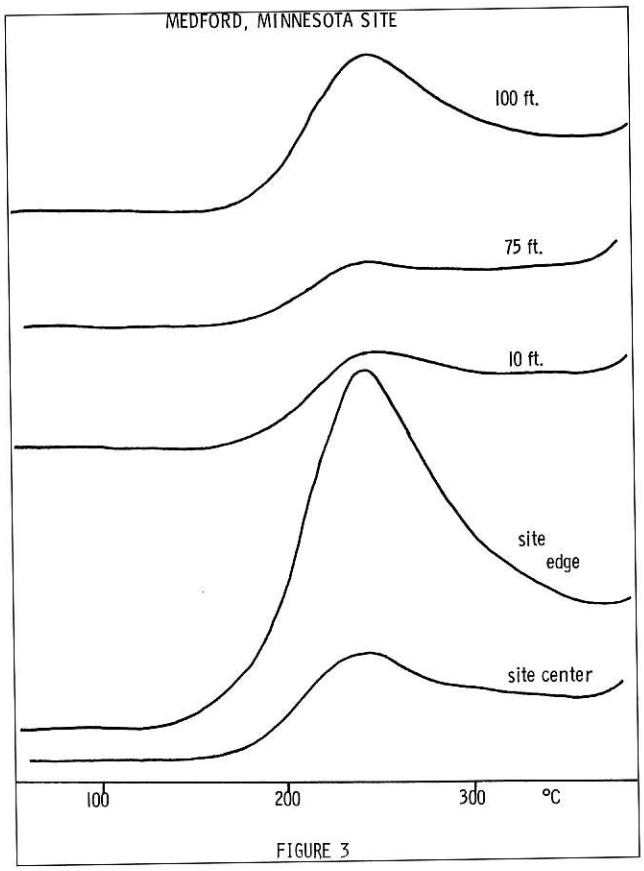


FIGURE 3

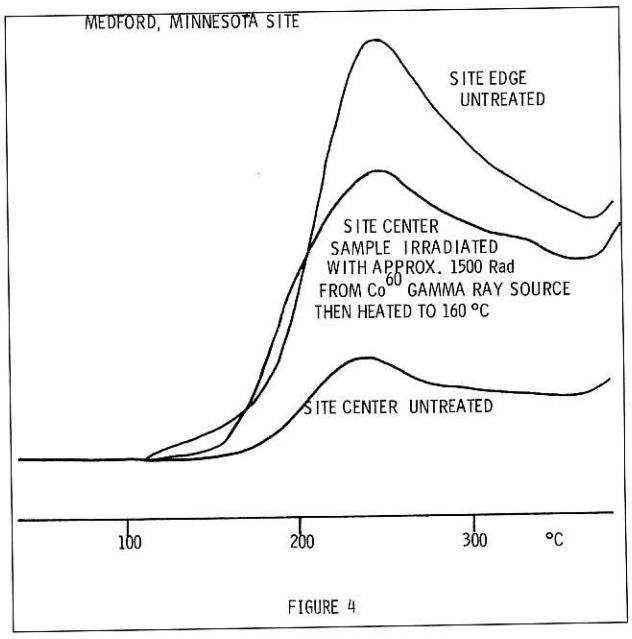


FIGURE 4

from the site edge shows a glow-curve peak at 240° C. that is roughly four times higher than the same peak in the soil at the site center. Three additional samples were collected along a line extending north from the site, at distances of 10, 75, and 100 feet from the site edge. All of the samples outside the site show glow-curves similar to that from the site center and differ in intensity from it by less than one half.

A quantity of the soil from the site center was next irradiated with 1500 Rad from a cobalt-60 gamma ray source, to determine both the sensitivity to radiation and the shape of the glow-curve which might result from any artificial irradiation. This treatment caused the development of a strong glow-curve peak at 110° C. which was not present in the site edge sample. However, it must be noted that the samples were not refrigerated after collection and that, in fact, they were not obtained until some time after the UFO landing is reported to have taken place. As a result, the peak at 110° C. would have decayed and could not have been expected to be retained in the samples as they were supplied to the laboratory.

For this reason, the irradiated sample was subjected to a one-minute heating at 160° C. to remove the low temperature peak to about the same extent as might be expected from natural decay at room temperature over a period of several months. The glow-curve which was obtained is shown in Figure 4, and has the same general form as that from the site edge.

The investigator might be tempted to jump to the conclusion that this result firmly establishes the fact that the site edge sample was indeed irradiated with a dose of ionizing radiation in excess of 1500 Rad, and that this proves that the UFO was responsible for the observed, anomaly in TL. Such a conclusion would be premature and some of the objections to it can be listed as follows:

1. Too few samples were collected and too few glow-curves were run to provide satisfactory statistical proof of the natural variation in TL existing in the soil in and around the site.

2. The site was reported to and visited by field investigators too late to obtain samples which could provide convincing proof of recent artificial irradiation with ionizing radiation.

3. No information was obtained about any possible disturbance of the soil prior to the UFO occurrence. Some samples might have been transported from other areas as construction fill, or have been dug up from lower layers in the soil at the site, thus contributing to the inhomogeneity of the results.

4. No attempt was made to test the samples for small variations in the radioactive elements present in the soils which might have caused substantial local variations in TL that would have nothing to do with UFO activity. (Samples were tested, however, for large-scale variations in radioactivity, and none were found.)

## Conclusions

Like so much of the other data which has been obtained, on the UFO phenomenon, the results of the TL studies on the Medford, Minnesota, case are inconclusive. An anomaly seems to exist between the expected natural order of things and the observed relationships. Unfortunately, inadequate information is at hand and convincing proof of the cause of

*(continued on page 28)*

## SERIOUS BUSINESS—*continued from page 6*

historian of the National Air Intelligence Center at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, I was told unofficially that when a sensational sighting such as the March 1997 Phoenix Lights case occurs, in all likelihood someone within the Air Force takes an active interest.[10] I am sure the mainstream media would once again write articles on such recent sightings if they could only get those officials to go on record.

The problem is simply this: After Ed Ruppelt's heyday at Blue Book, declassified military administrative files connected to UFOs are very difficult to locate. That does not mean the Air Force stopped having high-level discussions on the phenomenon, but certainly the January 1953 Robertson Panel put any substantial government action strictly out of public view. Then, after a remarkable wave of sightings stirred up public and then congressional concern in the mid-1960s, the military officially extricated itself from the subject by the end of that decade with the Condon Committee report. Another result of that study was to also make UFOs an illegitimate study for mainstream science, which not only discouraged research but funding as well.

When the Cold War ended there was great hope of a more enlightened time in which the government might reveal information on UFOs, and there were some hopeful indicators pointing in that direction by the late 1990s. But now we have an even tighter sense of national security since 9/11, which makes the subject no easier or popular to study. I do feel, however, much of the stigma or "ridicule factor" of the UFO subject has worn off for a large percentage of Americans. Unfortunately, the mainstream media and certainly government officials are more cautious if not outright resistant to opening up the UFO controversy again. I do not believe there is actual control of the press in this matter because the subtler approach of discouraging interest in the phenomenon among mainstream scientists and historians has worked so much more effectively for the last 30 years.

But if I had to conclude with a very brief recounting of the subsequent storyline since the early 1950s, this is what I would say has happened in official circles. Possibly totally unrelated to the Robertson Panel, in 1953 the Eisenhower administration gradually started to farm out high-level intelligence projects within a quickly expanding Department of Defense superstructure. Prior to that, cutting-edge and highly secretive projects had been under the oversight of the Research and Development Board, initially headed by and continually overseen by Drs. Vannevar Bush and Lloyd Berkner. These men remained as key advisors, but by 1957 high-level military-related projects were administered by the new Defense Department bureaucracy and all its interwoven defense contractors and projects. Eisenhower later regretted this, but it was all done to be more competitive in waging the Cold War both on earth and in the new space race. If UFOs were as serious a subject as all evidence suggests they were (and are), the topic met a similar fate.

There does seem to have been a high-level group within the Pentagon that at least retained some sort of oversight of the phenomenon. One source for this belief comes from a number of unofficial statements from Brig. Gen. Arthur Exon, a one-time commanding officer of Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. He was assigned as commander of Wright-Patterson in August 1964.[11] However, it was at an earlier assignment from 1955 to 1960, when he was a colonel stationed at the Pentagon, that he first heard of a UFO "control group." Exon understood that this UFO control committee was made up primarily of very high-ranking military officers and intelligence personnel.[12] Apparently, Exon learned little more about that group during his later assignment as commander of WPAFB (although he knew then of UFO investigative teams that were assembled in secret).

I also know from a confidential interview with a Wright-Patterson intelligence veteran of more than 50 years that one-time Project Blue Book director George T. Gregory also heard of this UFO control group. This would have dated back to the early to mid-1960s when Gregory held a Pentagon assignment. My source, a close friend of Gregory's, told me on very good authority that Gregory was then aware that this group was the body that actually made the decision to close project Blue Book via the excuse of a university-sponsored study that would pronounce that there was no need to investigate UFOs further.

The Air Force may very well have given up any acknowledged investigation of UFOs by late 1969. However, between Ruppelt's day and the 1960s, I do feel there is evidence to suggest that the Air Force through special projects acquired a much better handle on the UFO phenomenon. Sources have indicated, for example, that some very high-quality photographic evidence was captured that may have allowed them to do the true technical analysis that Ruppelt said was lacking during his tenure.

Since then, other areas of the military/government establishment may have sponsored specific UFO-related projects. They may have even expanded into collection of physical evidence. There are many stories about this, and although the Air Force never seemed to have physical evidence, if any material was acquired, surely the higher reaches of the Defense Department would have soon had a monopoly on that. Virtually every former Air Force Intelligence veteran I interviewed unanimously agreed that if anything as "exotic as a spaceship from another world" had been recovered, it would have gone to some Defense Department–monitored research and development project as opposed to Intelligence. (Air Force Intelligence, in fact, was never a popular career track nor totally in the information loop when it came to top-level military decision making.) Any R&D venture classified above top secret would still be in existence today as a result of that mid-1950s expansion and compartmentalization of the Defense Department and its contractors.[13] Each area would currently have its specialty. As one example, according to former *New York Times* investigative journalist Howard Blum, who has twice

been nominated for the Pulitzer Prize, the National Security Agency's codebreaking and electronic-surveillance specialists were monitoring extraterrestrial-based signals during the early 1980s. Blum's confidential and well-placed contacts at that time told him that these signals were nothing that could be traced to Earth's own electronic noise and were emanating not from distant galaxies but from within our own solar system.[14]

Much of our analysis of the recent UFO scene is based only on shadows. However, I feel many of these shadows of greater things, past as well as present, will one day be illuminated. It is a vitally important history to document. The people who will write that history are the next generation who are now inspired by and learning from the earlier period for which we do have more documentation.

## Footnotes

1. Edward J. Ruppelt, *The Report on Unidentified Flying Objects* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1956), pp. 13, 152.

2. Personal interview with Col. Rosengarten by Michael Hall at the USAF Museum, March 13, 1999.

3. Charles P. Cabell, *A Man of Intelligence: Memoirs of War, Peace, and the CIA* (Colorado Springs, Colo.: Impavide Publications, 1997), p. 246.

4. On that night, the dramatic actor Orson Welles produced and narrated a play based on H. G. Wells's novel *The War of the Worlds.* A classic account of a Martian invasion, the radio show was a frightening success. Unfortunately for many East Coast listeners, it seemed so real that some apparently flew into a panicked frenzy, actually believing aliens were landing in Grovers Mill, New Jersey.

5. Interoffice files of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, August 1952.

6. Edward J. Ruppelt's personal papers, File R022, courtesy of Michael Swords.

7. Ruppelt's personal papers, File R105, courtesy of Michael Swords.

8. Project Blue Book Files, National Archives, Record Group 341, Microfilm Pub. No. T-1206, Roll No. 12, Case 1584.

9. Project Blue Book Files, National Archives, Records Group 341, Microfilm Pub. No. T-1206, Roll No. 9, Case 1133.

10. Personal interview with Rob Young, historian for the National Air Intelligence Center, and Jean August of the Materiel Air Command History Office, by Michael Hall, July 12, 1999.

11. Exon did have a notable career. In March 1942, he entered the Army Air Corps as an aviation cadet and received his pilot rating in November. Right after flight school he went overseas to join the 57th Fighter Group in the European-African-Middle Eastern theater of operations. Exon logged 135 combat missions in Africa, Sicily, Italy, Corsica, and southern France with a total of 325 combat hours. Exon did see extensive action and earned the Distinguished Flying Cross, British Distinguished Flying Cross, and Croix de Guerre (France) with palm and star. In April 1944, Exon became a prisoner of war after he was forced to bail out during an attack on an Italian ammunition depot. He survived his German captors and after the war entered a two-year industrial administration course at the Air Force Institute of Technology at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio. In 1948, Exon was assigned to AMC Headquarters, as chief of the Maintenance Data Section. Then from August 1951 to April 1952 he received an assignment as deputy director of maintenance engineering at Middletown Air Materiel Area, Olmsted Air Force Base, Pennsylvania. The next two years he served in Japan as deputy for operations for the Far East Logistics Force. In July 1954 he attended the Air War College at Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama. Then in 1955 Exon, now a colonel, received the Pentagon assignment already mentioned where he held various procurement assignments, including the post of deputy for procurement and production and deputy chief of staff for materiel. In 1960 Exon became chief of ballistic missiles within the Directorate of Operations, Headquarters U.S. Air Forces in Europe, where he helped establish the Jupiter Ballistic Missile system for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in Italy and Turkey. He left that assignment in July 1963 and returned to Middletown Air Materiel Area, Olmsted Air Force Base. From August 1964 to 1966 Exon became commander of Wright-Patterson Air Force Base with the rank of brigadier general. After retiring from service Exon became director of the Defense Contract Administration Services Region in Los Angeles.

12. Kevin Randle, *The Roswell Encyclopedia* (New York: Harper Collins, 2000), pp. 104–115; Kevin Randle and Donald Schmitt, *Roswell UFO Crash Update* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Global Communications, 1995), pp. 115–117, 138–139, 142–149; Kevin Randle and Donald Schmitt, *The Truth About the UFO Crash at Roswell* (New York: Avon, 1994), pp. 73–79, 98–99, 118–121; and Kevin Randle and Donald Schmitt, *UFO Crash at Roswell* (New York: Avon, 1991), pp. 108–111, 231–234.

13. There has been some debate among military historians whether there actually are classifications above the level of "top secret." Officially there are not. No declassified document has ever been released with a classification stamp above that of top secret. But, I can tell you that from several off-the-record interviews Wendy Connors and I conducted with Air Force Intelligence veterans, there are many levels listed above the top secret classification. We were not given any names of such classifications but were assured by impeccable sources that there is a vast network of levels far above top secret. In fact, it was explained to us that there is an extensive security classification system within the Defense Department that goes far above that of conventional U.S. military chain of command.

14. Howard Blum, *Out There* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990), pp. 6–21, 32, 42. ✦

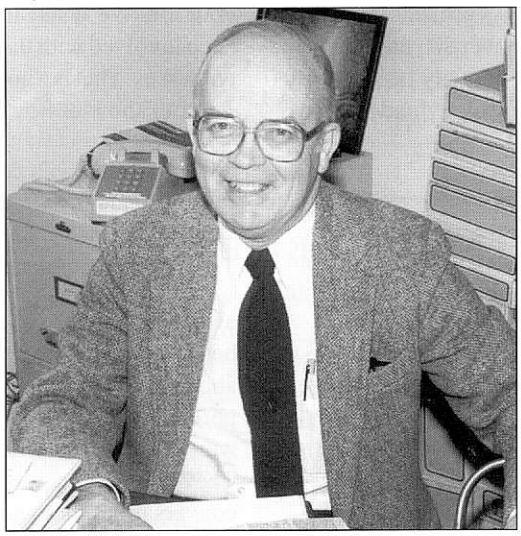
# JOHN TIMMERMAN:

# CUFOS BOARD MEMBER EXTRAORDINAIRE

BY MARK RODEGHIER

John Timmerman is retiring from his many activities with CUFOS, and the organization will never be the same. To tell the truth, the organization has never been the same since he first became involved with CUFOS in 1978, volunteering to investigate cases, and to do what else he could to be of assistance. There was indeed much else he could, and did do, in his 25 years with CUFOS.

Before I summarize his many accomplishments, I want to emphasize this point: CUFOS is only here today because of John. True, CUFOS originally came into existence because of the vision of Allen Hynek. But left up to him and his management team, CUFOS may well have dissolved after only a few years, as Allen was a fine scientist, but not a great administrator. John got involved with the organization at just the right moment to keep the place alive, and then to help it thrive—modestly—for many years. He gave his time, and his own personal funds, to keep CUFOS alive. Very few people would have done the same, and so we owe our continued existence and success to John's dedication to this enterprise.



*John Timmerman*

I would be remiss if I didn't also thank Margaretha, his patient and long-suffering wife, who has allowed John (if that is the word) to indulge his passion for UFOs well beyond anything she could have suspected 25 years ago. May she finally now get the time with John she deserves to enjoy their family, friends, and shared interests.

John was like all of us at CUFOS, hooked on UFOs from a relatively young age, or at least since UFOs burst on the scene in 1947 while he was in college, back from the war. He took his business and family responsibilities seriously, so he didn't become very active in UFO investigation or with any UFO organizations when he was a young man. He did, though, find time to interview a few UFO witnesses in the 1950s when he worked for Project "A" at Ohio Northern University, a long-forgotten chapter in UFO history.

He never lost his interest in UFOs, though, and he attended two of Allen's lectures in Lima, in the late 1950s and in 1975. I suspect that this second lecture may have put the bug in John's mind and been the eventual catalyst for him to volunteer. That, and the fact that his business had been sold, his finances were in good order, and his kids were off to college. He was finally able to indulge his lifelong interest, to our good fortune.

John's accomplishments at CUFOS are many. They include:

- Serving as Chairman of the board for several years;
- Serving as Treasurer for 23 years;
- Developing the CUFOS UFO Photo Exhibit and taking it to many malls all around the U.S., and Canada, raising money, awareness of CUFOS, and gathering original UFO reports;
- Creating the *CUFOS Associate Newsletter* and serving as its editor for five years;
- Maintaining a Lima office for the Center for over three years after our funds ran low;
- Negotiating the purchase of the NICAP files for CUFOS, a wonderful asset;
- Answering more correspondence than all of us combined;
- Giving hundreds of lectures in Ohio and elsewhere about UFOs, to raise knowledge and funds and keep CUFOS visible to the public;
- Recording public service announcements for radio stations to publicize the Center;
- His interest in UFO photos led to the creation of the CUFOS photo archives, which he used to raise additional funds through sales of photography.

And these are only the major accomplishments of John's long tenure with CUFOS. He also paid back with these activities his own loans to the Center because of our

*Mark Rodeghier is scientific director of the J. Allen Hynek Center for UFO Studies in Chicago.*

continuing lack of funds, which must be the ultimate definition of going above and beyond the call of duty.

John was the quintessential organization man for CUFOS, but he never lost his interest or enthusiasm for UFO sightings. He began his career with CUFOS doing an investigation, he did many over the years, and he still does the odd investigation nowadays. His hundreds of sighting reports collected at malls are soon to be published in a monograph that will illustrate the persistent and unusual character of the UFO phenomenon, and these cases are likely to be his long-term contribution to the field as a whole. Without primary data, we have nothing.

John is willing to talk to anyone, anywhere about UFOs, even the famous physicist Kip Thorne as it turns out, and he has no fear of being rebuffed or criticized. It is a wonderful trait to have, one that allowed him to speak to skeptics and proponents alike with respect and genuine interest. Through it all, John has managed to antagonize almost no one in the field, an amazing accomplishment.

Speaking personally, John has been an admirable colleague over the years on many CUFOS projects. He and I have worked closely together now for over 20 years, and we have relied on each other for help with many tasks. I only wish that all my colleagues, both in ufology and without, were so accommodating and pleasant.

John has other talents, and he has written many songs over the years, and favored his friends and colleagues with a song as Christmas card for as long as I've known him. Perhaps surprisingly, John has never written an organizational theme song for CUFOS. Maybe in his retirement he will find time to do so.

We will miss John, in every possible way. CUFOS will stumble on without him, somehow, if only to prove that no one is indispensable. We survived the death of Allen Hynek, and so we will survive John's retirement. But not easily or without a bit of struggle, I expect.

The interesting thing in ufology is that no one really is replaced. The field is so lacking in support, the organizations so weak, that each individual puts his personal stamp on whatever tasks he or she undertakes. Thus, we never replaced Allen, just found other ways to move forward. And so we won't actually replace John, just find people to do some of the things he did. But they'll not do them quite like he did.

So John (and Margaretha), have fun with the rest of your life. We'll stay in touch, and I know that John plans to keep involved with the fun part of ufology: the cases and the witnesses. That is a goal we all have, and this is your chance, John, to show us how to do it. ✦

# Letters

## CE4s: Pre-Arnold parallels?

*To the editor:*

I would like to point out striking similarities and features in relation to the article by Michael D. Swords, "Too Close for Condon: Close Encounters of the 4th Kind" (*IUR,* Fall 2003, pp. 3–6).

In the 1930 Texas UFO sighting, the observer said the object on the side of the road was gunmetal color, round and shaped like two dinner plates face to face; it had a dome on the upper top side, 100 feet across and 15 feet thick with a small door and chute that led down to the ground. One visitor (or humanoid) was about six feet tall, accompanied by several other smaller entities. The clothing they wore was tan in color like a scout uniform with no pockets, seams, or flaps, and with tight, little caps with narrow bills. No words were spoken, yet the witness heard the words. About 2.5 hours of missing time took place between the point when the witness was in her moving car and when she found herself at home 15 miles distant.

At the 1997 MUFON UFO Conference in Grand Rapids, Michigan, Australian ufologist Warren P. Aston said in his talk that early in May 1940, near Townsend, Montana, witness Udo Wartena said he saw a large disc-shaped object about 100 feet wide, the color of stainless steel, like two soup plates, one inverted over the other. A circular stairway was let down from the object and a man came out wearing a light-gray pair of overalls and a circular cap or tam on his head and light slippers on his feet. Wartena was invited aboard and met two humanoids with translucent skin and pure-white hair who looked young and strong but said they were 600 to over 900 years old in earth years respectively. They said they knew over 500 languages. During a two-hour conversation, the two visitors described their ship, how it operated, and that they came from another planet, had visited earth before, left instructions and advice and warnings, and monitored world societies. Also, Wartena was told to tell no one about this visit until later, because nobody would believe his story until many years later. Born in 1903, Wartena passed away in Oregon in 1989.

*Kenneth Lloyd Larson*
*Los Angeles, California*

## Accelerated time

*To the editor:*

Budd Hopkins and Carol Rainey (Craig R. Lang, "Spooky Plausibility: A Review of *Sight Unseen,*" *IUR,* Fall 2003, pp. 15–16, 26–27) have revealed a formerly unrecognized and important aspect of the abduction process in invisibility. Yet how is it achieved?

One possible explanation for the phenomenon might be accelerated time. When passing into such a state, an abductee would suddenly become invisible to a normal-time ob-

# OF INTEREST TO CUFOS ASSOCIATES

### HOW UFOs USED THE PI AND GOLDEN SECTION TO MEASURE THE WORLD

UFOs' modern role as protective chariots of fire who outlined intelligent design units and grid patterns around measured creation worlds. Book, $15.00. Kenneth Lloyd Larson, 200 North Commonwealth Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90004.

### FUND FOR UFO RESEARCH

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### SURPRISE!

Even readers in Tehran, Iran, are asking us about the LAURA PROJECT of CUFOS. Recently, our Mr. Norooz Rezazadeh wrote for the explanatory letter. YOU should again read page 27 in the Fall issue of *IUR*. We will assist you with many good suggestions if you mail your stamped return envelope today to our active LAURA Project, P.O.Box 1621, Lima, OH 45802-1621. The UFO Phenomenon needs a LAURA everywhere!!!

server. Returning to normal time, the abductee would reappear as suddenly. In most cases, the UFO and abductors would arrive and stay within the accelerated-time field, remaining invisible throughout to persons in normal time.

An accelerated-time field might also be related in some way to the ability of abductees and abductors to pass through closed windows and walls in some form of space-time warping. The missing time noted by abductees would be, by inference, missing accelerated time, with abductions lasting longer than the normal time measured after the experience. The accelerated-time state may itself impede the post-abductee's memory of the event. Perhaps accelerated time is normal time for the abductors, and the human world is sluggish and fortuitously vulnerable from their viewpoint.

Several features of the abduction process might be explained in terms of accelerated time. As seen from the abductee's viewpoint, as he or she enters accelerated time, strange, hard-to-articulate bodily and mental sensations may be the result of the time shift.

The bright light commonly experienced at the start of abductions is often followed by a deep silence (see Budd Hopkins's *Missing Time,* chapter 4, the Howard/Toms River abduction), particularly noticeable in the usually noisy outdoor environment or close to UFOs. The silence may be a feature of time shift.

Perhaps the often silent motion of UFOs reflects their presence within an altered time field, as seen from the edge of the time field. The apparent frozen poses of nonabductees on the scene (noted by Whitley Strieber, Betty Andreasson-Luca and others) might be due to the abductees' view of normal time seen from an accelerated state.

Most abductees are too overwhelmed by the abduction experience to notice subtle changes in the environment, but I do recall reading a young girl's abduction account in which she recalled being led by abductors past an indoor swimming pool where the wavelets seemed frozen in suspended animation. (I cannot now recall the source of this account.)

The concept of accelerated time–induced invisibility was compellingly explored as fiction in the 1968 *Star Trek* episode "Wink of an Eye" (although the phenomenon was caused by the drinking of "Scalosian water.")

*Michael Lampen*
*San Francisco, California*

### UFO LANDING PATTERNS

*To the editor:*

In the Fall 2003 issue of *IUR,* Fred Merritt summarizes his excellent research on patterns found in UFO landing cases. I am writing this note just to correct a couple of items. In Catena II (Classic Discs) the February 6, 1966 (Aluche, Madrid), and June 1, 1967 (San José de Valderas, Madrid), Spanish cases are included as typical examples of this category. I must inform that both cases were hoaxes, generated by the same individual, José Luis Jordán Peña, the infamous author of the UMMO papers.

In Catena V (Pumpkin Heads) is the July 2 (actually July 1), 1953, Villares del Saz (Cuenca, Spain), occupant case. It might have been a fabrication, but I am not fully convinced, as some facts are lacking and because of its age we may never verify them; at any rate, in my view this case cannot be taken as characteristic of any specific type of event.

Catalog compilers and pattern-searchers must be very

cautious in selecting foreign cases. In particular, I would recommend that local researchers always be consulted on individual cases. This is not a criticism of the Merritt paper, as he based his work on factual sources; it is merely a general comment. Double-checking is indispensable to avoid errors and false findings.

The UFO literature contains references to many landing and occupant cases (as well as photographic, abduction, and other classes) from such countries as Argentina, Mexico, Brazil, Norway, France, Italy, etc., that I know have been solved by national mainsteam ufologists. As this is often unknown to compilers, these cases are sometimes used for pattern-recognition analyses and other studies, when these are actually false UFOs. They contaminate the statistical samples and corrupt the final results.

Let me close my giving my praise to the *International UFO Reporter,* one of the few valid UFO publications in the world.

*Vicente-Juan Ballester Olmos*
*Research Director, Anomaly Foundation*
*Valencia, Spain*

✦

## SKEPTICAL FAILURES—*continued from page 13*

ing. Neither could find a solution to the sighting—your choice of weather balloons, ball lightning, space debris, or meteorites—as readily as the skeptics could. This underscores the truism that no matter the source, an unexplained UFO case is dangerous to those of a certain mindset.

## SKEPTICISM NORTH OF THE BORDER

The usual suspects in the United States didn't chime in with their own implausible skeptical explanations. Perhaps they thought the Mexicans were handling things just fine. But other less experienced hands bravely ventured forth. On the conservative online NewsMax.com May 13, Charles R. Smith, a journalist and consultant on military cyber-technology, reported this about the incident:

> While X-files and UFO extra-terrestrial believers say the video is clear proof of some form of spacecraft visiting Earth, the sighting can be attributed to the Bush defense budget and not little green men. The unidentified aircraft that shadowed the Mexican surveillance plane are reportedly part of a squadron of new stealth strike craft operating from the U.S.
>
> The aircraft are equipped with special infrared light panels that are only visible to special cameras or night vision gear. The panels are used in formation flying outside of hostile airspace to prevent the aircraft from colliding with each other or with support aircraft such as refueling planes. The panels are especially handy during aerial refueling with U.S.A.F. tankers, allowing the tanker operators to visually monitor the stealth planes in total darkness.

When contacted, Smith wouldn't reveal the source of his journalistic scoop, which is unattributed in the article. That's one problem, but the more serious are the logical flaws. Let's see, we have new stealth strike aircraft, not yet publicly revealed, yet the military decided to fly 11 of them in Mexico to play games with a Mexican military aircraft, which was bound to detect them since it was using the same technology that, Smith claims, tanker operators use to visually monitor the planes (not too stealthy, that). I especially like the part about the panels being used to prevent the aircraft from colliding with each other. (How do the Blue Angels manage without the panels?)

Not to be outdone, Canada had to join the fray with comments from Ivan Semeniuk, a science journalist and host of a show on the Canadian Discovery Channel. He began with a standard line, stating that the video images aren't that different from the debris of the Mir spacecraft returning to earth. But then Semeniuk rose to the task at hand, and realizing that the evidence might be hard to explain, he offered this when asked what test could be applied to determine if a UFO was of extraterrestrial origin: "One is that there has to be no other explanation and the second is that it has to be seen by large numbers of [independent] credible observers . . . so this doesn't come out any stronger than numerous other reports that we have seen like this in the past."

Ah, now I get it. If there is solid evidence, but from only one group of witnesses, no matter how numerous, of professional, competent, trained observers using advanced equipment recording physical evidence, well, that doesn't really prove anything. Now if there had only been *another* military aircraft nearby filming the UFOs, we might be on to something. (Wait a minute, weren't there stealth aircraft nearby? If only we could find those pilots!) Semeniuk illustrates nicely the skeptical fallback position: UFO evidence is never good enough; there is always another hoop to jump through.

All these skeptical explanations can't be correct and very probably none of them are. Meanwhile, back in reality, several experienced UFO investigators are studying the data and attempting to determine what might truly explain the UFOs seen by the crew. If an explanation can be found, so be it. But we'll have to do the hard work ourselves on this. ✦

## THERMOLUMINESCENCE—*continued from page 22*

the anomaly cannot be obtained. TL does offer one large advantage in UFO research, however. Any TL effects which might be caused by the UFO are retained in the samples after the UFO has disappeared, and repeated runs on the samples can provide a basis for statistical treatment of the results. Furthermore, a carefully collected and well-preserved set of samples obtained immediately after a UFO landing might provide some genuine hard evidence about the true nature of the phenomenon. ✦